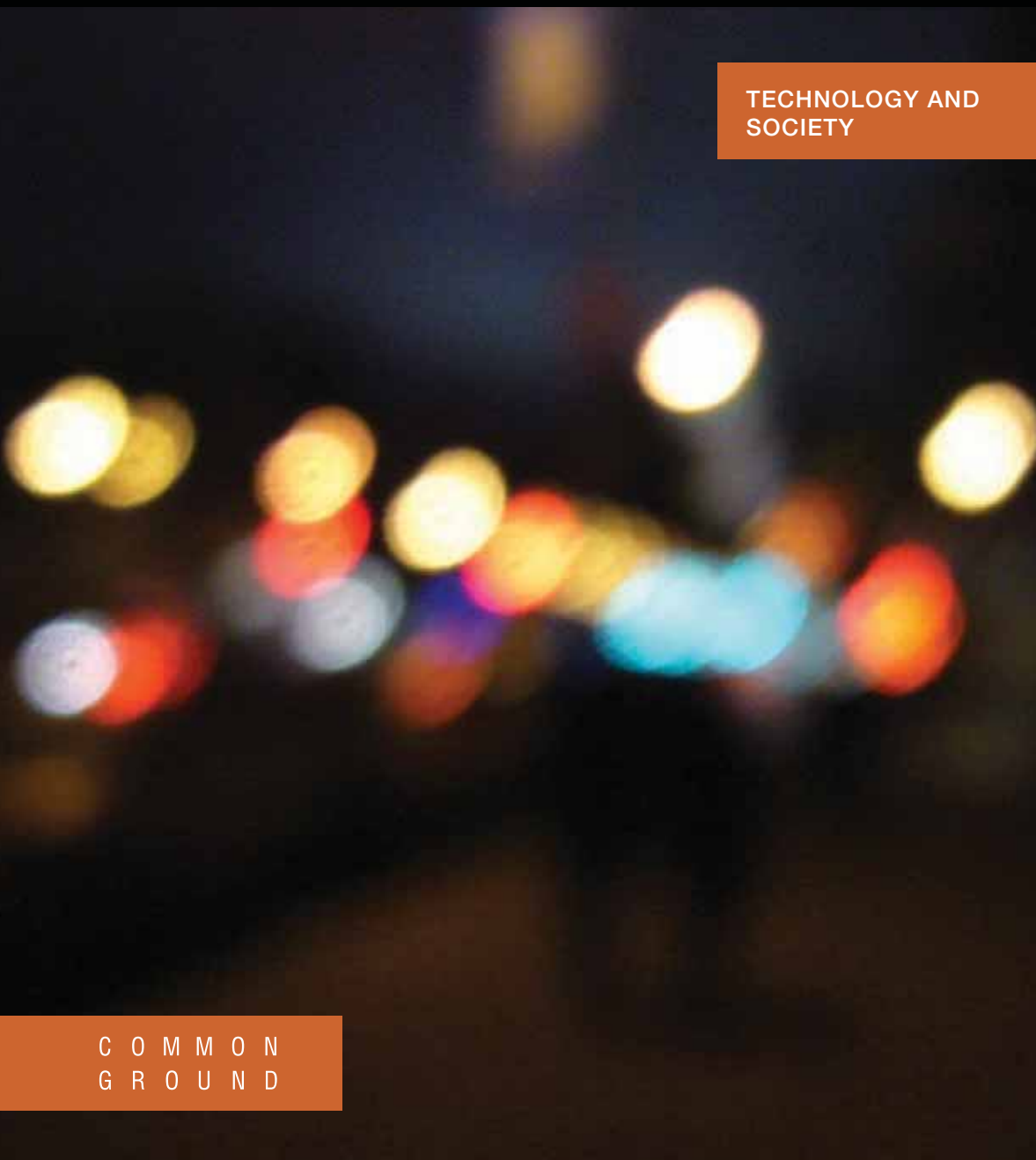
UPRISING

The Internet's Unintended Consequences

Marcus Breen



TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

COMMON GROUND

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MARCUS BREEN

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Common Ground

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Life is no dream! Beware and beware and beware!
"Unsleeping City"
Federico Garcia Lorca

For my sons Aidan and Eamon

For my mentor William H. Melody

For my comrade Christopher Barnett

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Preface

This book started as an idea that became part of a course about new technology and society, which I taught to undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the late 1990s. I stopped working on it because I was working for Gartner as a consultant on Telecommunication development and regulatory policy, mostly in Mexico. After Gartner where I learned a lot about telecommunication policy making, I returned to the ideas around proletarianization and thus the writing. Given pressing demands, the book took more time to complete than it should have, yet it grew with the Internet. Sensing a moving feast, the research was always somewhat informed by the emergence of new material and the threat that I was totally wrong about proletarianization. As time progressed I became more and more convinced that it was important to make the case as best I could by launching the project across a number of disciplinary areas, safe in the knowledge that this was a topic which could not be undertaken by an academic specialist. Cultural studies came close to offering ideas and concepts about the Internet, while sociology, cultural policy studies, history, political economy, Marxism, institutional economics, intercultural communication, and new fields such as Internet studies and pornography studies added to the list of reference material with sometimes great ideas. At other times the ideas were little more than evidence of academic fashion victimhood. The point is that a lot of the material discussed here combines the theoretical, speculative, empirical and critical.

My main objective has been to offer critical research that clarifies my belief that the Internet is a game changing technology. It is a game that is changing the world we have known. Proletarianization offers a way of reflecting on the challenges facing civil society and Enlightenment modes of thinking: what I think of as civility. There is however, little time for reflection. The more I know about the Internet and what it has spawned the more anxious I become. In fact we are approaching a point in human history where it is no longer possible to say "Time will tell."

Many people have been involved in various ways with supporting this project over many years, often unwittingly. Graduate and undergraduate students at UNC and Northeastern Universities have been tolerant of my ramblings. Colleagues at both universities provided me with spaces in which to work and environments in which to teach and to undertake research. Some but not all include: Bill Balthrop, Larry Grossberg, Ken Hillis, Joanne Morreale, Murray Forman, Vincent Rocchio, Kumi Silva, David Monje, Craig Robertson, Alan Zaremba, David Marshall, Carla Kaplan, the Humanities reading groups at Northeastern and James Stellar. Rachel Gibson offered support even at those times when she was not aware that her ideas were filtering through. Julie Jersyk at the Northeastern University library located documents at the Federal Commuincation Commission that informed all the material in the policy chapter and sadly indicated how diffi-

cult it is to actually find important documents. Corrinne Connolly provided research assistance for the jihad chapter. My Australian colleagues include Graeme Turner, Gerard Goggin, Catharine Lumby, Chris Healey, Robert Hassan and Terry Flew who have maintained enthusiasm for my research and been friends through the thick and the virtual.

In Beijing, Professor Dengao Long and Professor Jiming Cai involved me in the Political Economy Forum at Tsinghua University and at Renmin University ProfessorYang Baojun and Xi Li proved to be great colleagues. Graduate students at both those institutions were gracious and generous in their discussions with me. My thanks to Professor Robert Lowndes who supported my travel to China.

In visits to the UK and Europe when I was offering some of these ideas to conferences Terhi Rantanen and Richard Collins proved true friendship with their accommodations, as did my brother and his partner David and Karen Breen. In Athens and Leeds Liza Tsaliki, Katharine Sarikakis, Fiona Attwood, Rebecca Sullivan, Stephen Maddison, Renata Šribar and other researchers offered their insights into my research on the Internet and pornography. Connecting with colleagues at the Association Of Internet Researchers and through the International Association of Mass Communication Reasearch, the Association of Cultural Studies and the journal *Triple C* has been both real and virtual over a number of years. The connection with *Triple C* enhanced my association with Christian Fuchs and Wolfgang Hofkirchner and the Salzburg ICT and Society cohort, for which I am grateful. Neil Larsen was especially kind in helping me to develop my ideas around the abject, while Jeremy Hunzinger offered support for all manner of abstraction around institutional economics and unbounded irrationality. Eran Fisher has been wonderfully supportive. Steve Jones and Jody Berland are two long standing friends from whom I have learned a lot in my research strategies and literary orientations. My participation in several Technology, Knowledge and Society conferences offered me opportunities to try out ideas regardless of the consequences. Bill Cope and Phillip Kalantzis Cope have been extraordinary in the development of those forums and in supporting my research and publications.

My life partner Deborah has heard about this project for years. I cannot thank her enough for the sustaining sense of hope she provides to me and our children, Hester, Aidan and Eamon. Now more than ever, we are all in this together.

Part I

Proletarianization Theory

Chapter 1
Introduction

This book is about recuperating "proletarianization" in the light of the Internet. The established meaning of the word was derived from Marxist industrial critique, which considered the way the labor theory of value robbed workers of their freedom. That struggle over emancipation from wage labor continues, but this book is not about that. This book offers another definition of proletarianization, one that co-inhabits the space occupied by the original meaning. In other words, this book is doing what dictionaries and lexicons do: adding a line of meaning to a word. While it is almost arrogant to suggest that proletarianization can be redefined, it is a wonderfully rich word that has been sequestered away in a dusty library of critical anachronisms where its meaning is limited by nineteenth century culture. Having moved into a multilayered globalized world of intense interactivity where the material, the real, the imagined and the virtual produce fissions of meaning, redefinitions of the critical language lexicon that includes proletarianization are an important part of the way we can navigate the world.

The proposed new sense of meaning for "proletarianization" turns the industrial connotations of the word on its head when viewed through the imprecise lens of the "knowledge economy" when combined with "the information society." These buzz word phrases operate in the post-industrial and Internet world even while industrialization continues, even while industry and its rewards are hidden from the majority of the developed world's people. Proletarianization incorporates both a reminder and a reconstitu-

tion of the process by which the artifacts, everyday life, values and behavior - the culture - of the underclass, the subaltern and the abject circulate and actively move into, impact, disturb and combine with the established way of life of the advanced world, where people are themselves not removed from proletarianization but through the Internet are more profoundly incorporated into it. This reimagining of proletarianization, complete with its knowing imprecision, and its tangible material impacts, offers a study of the mode of life around the Internet.

The intellectual diversity that accompanies this project is a high risk undertaking. My work as an academic and a critic is as one who is not committed to maintaining the status quo. In fact, the Internet despite all the hype, boosterism and marketing energy associated with it, is changing the status quo whether we like it or not. By drawing on the widest possible range of academic and critical traditions, this book lays out new grounds for understanding contemporary political economy. After all, the world is organized around political economy – the interaction between social and individual action and its formal and informal organization. The Internet is changing those relationships and proletarianization is a central aspect of the reorientation.

Re/defining proletarianization

My priority has been to explore culture and the processes of its production that were not previously in circulation due to the suppression, rejection, even vilification of legal and social limits based on Enlightenment notions of civility and decency. These boundaries had become commonplace in civil society and are still key components of liberal democratic societies. The Internet changed the settings of those components in ways that are different to previous settings in recent human history. In taking this approach it could be argued that I essentialize the Internet as the "cause" of this shift. I make no excuses for essentializing because this study is about detailing significant shifts in social and economic relationships that have created rearrangements in the social world that are directly a result of the Internet. Of course, the Internet is itself an essentializing and determining cultural vehicle that has brought major changes to the way the world operates and that change – the theory of change, political economy – takes place on a broad canvas that requires multiple research strategies, theories and insights. That is why this cannot be a book about a Marxist theory of the proletariat. The moment when studies about the proletariat were needed emerged in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and cannot do justice to questions of proletarianization in the Internet era when class itself is "not a stable social configuration."[1] This is not to say that the narrative of the

1.Harvey, David (2005) Neoliberalism: A brief history, New York: Oxford: 31.

proletariat as a class should not continue to be written by those who persist with that necessary research, driven on its unsteady trajectory by theories of justice and democracy.

The research focus on proletarianization began for me with Walter Benjamin's throw away line at the conclusion of his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," considered in detail in chapter 2. Benjamin wrote as if everyone knew what he meant when he referred to proletarianization. Maybe they did in 1935 when his essay was first published. In those days the word echoed around the Bolshevik concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, accompanied by the uneasy claims of Stalin's autocratic idiocy in the name of the proletariat together with modernism's promise for worker ideals for a life that was, in Benjamin's imagination, a life without the horrors of the excesses of industrial labor. In the Benjaminian definition, proletarianization's connotations were established around ideas from European progressive political struggles. Fundamentally, proletarianization reflected the idea that people operated under the thumb of capital's system of labor. In classic Marxist terms, the surplus value is extracted from the labor of the worker and kept to be amassed by the capitalist, who then uses it against the interests of the worker. In this subjugation, the worker is proletarianized – reduced to wage slavery in a cash economy. Slavoj Žižik continued this idea when he suggested that the current financial crisis (from 2007) produced a proletarianization which would "deprive us of the symbolic substance of our lives."[2] The Internet refuses the imagined "us" of this comment, especially if the "us" is white European males. Indeed, proletarianization as it is used in this book problematizes years of debates about the labor theory of value because the Internet brings everything into play.

New theories and practices of the knowledge economy and information society push proletarianization in new directions. Given this, my interest is in reworking proletarianization in the network society, in the information economy, around and within new media, even within digital stuff, in fact linked with the entire edifice of the Internet's possibilities and potentialities that make it possible to see and experience life. The short hand way of describing the relationship of some of these unsatisfactorily slippery terms is to invoke the Internet as the catch all. My approach to proletarianization is about the culture that circulates on the Internet. The values, ideas, possibilities, forces and trajectories of the underclass, the swarm, the masses, the subaltern and the abject are now before us, with us, altering our landscapes of meaning, replacing good language with bad as the unregulated offers itself, no rational sensibilities required.

The unintended consequences that are examined as a result of the Internet are not merely an unnerving continuation of technology's facilitation of the expression of culture. Furthermore, the unintended consequences are not ergonomic issues like back pain that result from sitting at computer

2.Žižek, Slavoj (2009) "What does it mean to be a revolutionary today?" Debate with Alex Callinicos, Marxism 2009, You Tube, http://www.counterfire.org

monitors for long periods of time, described in some reports as the "revenge" of middle class life.[3] No, proletarianization challenges belief in rational personhood, rather than bad backs. The argument is that life has been transformed into a visitation of ideologies that have been previously dismissed as irrelevant.

When I started this project several years ago I was convinced that the Internet was like the little terriers that sanitary workers with the Brisbane City Council in Australia trained to chase rats in the 1960s. The sanitary workers in their gray overalls walked the subtropical suburban streets knocking on doors, asking to look around to see if there were any rats. If the answer was even maybe, the little black and white dogs would dig and bark until the rats appeared or were forced out by flooding their underground nests. Initially, I believed the Internet ideologues were the rats being chased out of their burrows into the light by the terriers... but there the metaphor ceased to effectively function because there are no rats or terriers on the Internet, only the low cost of digital gear that feeds into the dull glow of the monitor that attracts all and sundry. There are vast numbers of users whose liminal experience seems to be always stimulated as they log on, lash out, lament then reinvent their lives with an anxiety that seems akin to an exciting sporting event. There's a lot to unpack in moving from the rats to a clearer understanding about the unintended consequences of the Internet.

One way that *Uprising* does this is to seek to dig below common place assertions about class. US historian, film producer and former Democracy Council member Kerry Candaele suggested for example, that "America's dirty little secret," is "class inequality."[4] If this book was to be about class inequality as a dirty little secret then it would only be worth reading for the dirt – and I would not have spent my time writing it. Fundamentally this study explores proletarianization, which through its formative relationship with the Internet has produced a fresh set of possibilities for political action. In total, Internet users make up a small but growing percentage of the planet's population, and yet, as Kerry Candaele went on to say, an "even dirtier" secret (this one does not qualify as "little") is the hidden history of class conflict in the US, and by default in the rest of the world. Once the language of conflict is injected into the discussion, the articulation between the Internet and class becomes volatile and unavoidable and is connected to a lengthy academic history.

Seen from the perspective of the Internet, class is an imprecise term. Productive attempts have been made to appropriate established meanings around class and the Internet, drawing on the "cycle of history" theory. This was the premise behind Nick Dyer-Witherford's book *Cyber Marx*. Dyer-

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3. Tenner, Edward, (1997) Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences, New York, Vintage.

4. Candaele, Kerry (2008) "MLK on Class, Conscience and Corporate Buyouts," Huffington Post, Accessed January 2008 at http//:www.huffingtonpost.com/kerry-candaele/#blogger_bio

Witherford drew on established notions of class to paint a picture of the "cycles of struggle," where "composition / decomposition / recomposition" were part of a traditional understanding of class.[5] Concepts such as these that draw on classical logic are difficult to apply to the Internet's proletarianization because the terms of culture itself are so different in the knowledge economy that cycles are very nearly anachronistic tools with which to use analytical tools. Furthermore, the inherent reliance on linearity of meaning is similarly problematic. In these models, class struggle relies on definitions of class that were established in modernist times on modernist terms. They are now part of an historical patchwork that must be remade in the information society era.

Clearly there's more at stake than understanding how the articulation of the Internet with class offers insights into proletarianization. There's the radical subject in revolt: the politics of action. This is where the Internet's potential is equally informed by the unintended consequences because of the way culture is reorganized due to people's access to the Internet. This empowerment is not removed from the continuing history of the proletariat, which is as urgent as ever.

> The vital, urgent question is that of politics from below, politics for those who are excluded and cut off from the state politics of the ruling class. We have to solve the puzzle of proletarian revolutions and their repeated tragedies: How do we spurn the dust and win the prize? How can a class that is physically and morally stunted in its daily life by the involuntary servitude of forced labor transform itself into the universal subject of human emancipation?[6]

The answer is that proletarianization offers a type of politics that is transformed by the Internet. It may not be the kind of organized class politics of the past – in fact, this study suggests that it is not.

Ideas about class and the Internet should not be confused with "folksonomy," an idea in Internet studies that offers a productive way of identifying the massive (folk culture) networks of global linkages to information.[7] For example, *Wired* magazine's definition of folksonomy encourages the belief that technologized everybodies arrive in some sort of Silicon Valley fantasy land of infinite informationization.

> A folksonomy ... arises spontaneously as Net users encounter information, think about what it means, and tag it with descriptive words. Then software makes the information accessible via a simple keyword search. The results aren't definitive or scientific, but they can be very useful.[8]

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5. Dyer-Witherford, Nick (1999) Cyber-Marx cycles and circuits of struggle in high-technology capitalism, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press: 66.

6. Bensaïd Daniel (2007) "Leaps! Leaps! Leaps!" in Lenin Reloaded: Towards a politics of truth, (Eds.) S. Budgen, S. Kouvelakis, S. Zizek, Durham: Duke University Press: 149.

7. Vanderwal, Thomas (2007) "Folksonomy," URL accessed May 2008, http//:vanderwal.net.folksonomy/html

8. Stirling, Bruce (2005) "Out of the Chaos," Wired, April, URL accessed May 2008, http//:www.wired.com.wired archive/13.04/view/html?pg=4/

The point is that folksonomy is a description of technology utilization that offers quick access to information about and by everyone, their culture and the challenges and new organizing goals, which include their struggles for emancipation. Put in these terms, folksonomy is a concept that helps understand the tools of Internet empowerment – with dozens of caveats attached, many of which are discussed in the following pages.

New Class Definitions

All language is open to change. That is the nature of history. The question is what are the new meanings of class? What happens when a politicized word such as class is examined in the light of the Internet? There are a number of ways to answer those questions, one being an example taken from cultural studies, which informs most of this book. Raymond Williams published *Key Words in Culture* in 1976. A revised version was published in 1984. In the reworked version he included words such as gender and sexuality that he omitted in the first edition. And while on one hand he added key words that pressed up from the culture he also reviewed the meaning of the original key words, thereby showing how their meaning had been socially constructed and changed as part of the architecture of social relations and thus the project of cultural studies. That project was and is in a permanent transition, as indeed is language, as the rise of semiotics suggested: the connotations or signifieds we choose to prioritize as we make sense of the meaning of class explains a lot about our own class position, our aspirations and our sense of justice. Two recently published books, derived directly from Williams's project are *New Key Words* and *Key Words in American Cultural Studies.* They indicate the historical flow and changed meaning of language, and the additional specificity – in one case national – that key words have.

An additional part of my argument is that proletarianization is not restricted to concerns about media representations, although it is part of the global aesthetic that the Internet has produced – to paraphrase Fredric Jameson. It is much more than a set of questions about aesthetics. If it was only about aesthetics, proletarianization would not be as challenging a concept as it is. How and why did this happen? I explore how the era of telecommunications deregulation and market liberalization stretching from the 1970s brought access to pretty much any content and thereby ushered in the Internet's global interactivity, which incorporates unregulated content. As liberal democratic governments around the world stepped away from their claims to represent "the public interest," private interests came to dominate the Internet in a broad ranging social and economic discourse that was and is new, driven by the forces of unregulated economic interests and entrepreneurial ideology, largely sponsored by business innovators and their promoters in political parties of all persuasions. In this context, governments redefined the public as the market and the Internet was pleased to follow the freedom train of unrestrained digital information,which problematized

the idea of knowledge as it gave way to information.[9] That is, the apparent free flow of unregulated information bears the ideology of forms of knowledge. In this complex of forces within the political economy of the everyday, government policy making has been articulated into the class theory of proletarianization.

Institutional economics is utilized for its historical value as an analytical tool. This critical "school" emerged during the New Deal to offer a layer of criticism to public policy making. Drawing on Thorstein Veblen and John Commons, institutional economics offers an established path of social criticism within a broadly conceived range of options. Utilizing this broadly conceived range helps overcome the limits that a single theoretical and methodological approach to the Internet confronts. Institutional economics offers a strategic and critical approach to the Internet and its political economy. For example, Vincent Mosco's summary of institutional economics indicates how it departs from limited disciplinary approaches such as neoclassical orthodoxies:

> by maintaining that the organizational structure of the economy, not the market, is the major force in the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. The analysis of organizational structure incorporates institutional history, the sociology of bureaucratic activity, the assessment of technological constraint and opportunity, and the influence of social custom, law and culture on the social construction of value.[10]

For an additional layer of analysis I draw on Kant's idea of immaturity as a way of exploring proletarianization that is mobilized due to the contingencies of the Internet. I draw on this concept to problematize the Enlightenment, its values and the ideas that drive the west. The collision between Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment world views is sharply highlighted by the Internet in what I describe as "unbounded irrationality." All this makes for what Edward Said and then Stuart Hall described as "grubby worldliness," "that culture has always to exist" within "worldliness".[11] Why this repetitious allusion to dirt on the part of cultural analysts likes Said, Hall and Candaele? The reason is that proletarianization is unsettling. In searching for an explanation, established language struggles to locate metaphors that describe immature culture – it ends up not being pure or clean. For example, an art and pornography case in Australia in May 2008 illustrates the point. When artist Bill Henson displayed photographs of naked children in an art gallery in Sydney, Germaine Greer, whose incisive intellect is equal if not superior to any other art and literary critic in recent history, wrote a

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9. Breen, Marcus (1997) Information Does Not = Knowledge: theorizing the political economy of virtuality, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, http//:jcmc.indiana.edu/vol3/issue3/breen.html

10. Mosco, Vincent (2009) The Political Economy of Communication (second edition) London: Sage: 52.

11. Hall, Stuart (2007) "Interview with Colin McCabe," Critical Quarterly, Vol. 50, 1 and 2: 12-42 (28).

newspaper column explaining the grayness of the borders that distinguish art from pornography. The giveaway to Greer's uncertainty about language and thus, for my purposes, proletarianization came in the following lines:

> images which the vast majority would never have seen or wanted to see will be made famous and will be looked up on the internet by slavering hordes.[12]

The "vast majority"and the "slavering hordes" are connected by their ability to see, and the images they see come to them via the Internet. The connotations here are clear: the unknown, "the other," the slavering types who cannot control themselves, who have dirt under their fingernails and evil in their minds, are Internet users. They are immature. It is difficult to accommodate this change. Engaging with the knowledge of proletarianization involves the challenge of understanding the slavering hoardes whose interests appear in the privacy of the desktop computer's monitor space. Not to engage is unavoidable yet to do so would amount to failure in a world of expanding ideas.

The discussion about proletarianization and the Internet is also about "privatism," which offers a way of imagining the self-centered aloneness of the Personal Computer user.[13] With each newly empowered Internet technology it seems that Nicholas Negroponte's then dubious claim that "True personalization is now upon us," is actually approaching realization.[14] Everyday users at their desktops and millions of others using hand held devices built around mobile telephony technology, experience the Web "reality" of immediate social interaction in new private spaces. (Of course, privacy itself is contingent on remade definitions of the public sphere.) Filmed footage operates within the convergence of digital everything, altering the psychosocial world we inhabit. Spam is powerfully responsible for this shift, where millions, perhaps billions of spam emails offer sexual experiences at all times of the day and night, even at times that were once set aside for work. As I sit down to work, my university email inbox offers this one in February 2009: "Sex can be one of the most enjoyable parts of your life. It strengthens relationships and adds excitement. Always be ready!" Within the new domain of privatism an individualized identity formation is offered to me, although what I want is to write the book. I am distracted, put upon by this sexualization of my work space, my computer, my mind and my experiential self. And yet, in Eric Erikson's psychological sense, while privatism's digital distractions may add to identity conflicts and crises, to

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12. Greer. Germaine, (2008) "Through a lens darkly, " The Age, June 2,http//:theage.com.au/opinion/through-a-lens-darkly/20080501-2kgo.html

13. Hampton, K. N., Gupta, N. (2008) Community and social interaction in the Wireless City: wi-fi use in public and semi-public spaces, New Media and Society, Vol. 10, No. 6: 831 – 850.

14. Negroponte, Nicholas (1996) Being Digital, New York: Random House: 162.

diffusions and confusion, the distractions also produce new possibilities for identity creation within proletarianization.[15] It is not an easy time to be a writer.

Ideas around privatism offer another node for research as the Internet rises in popularity through all manner of individual devices, transforming human interactions into virtualized necessities. Conceptually, this is not an easy transition to imagine, given its implications for transforming social life into something virtual/visual. Abstractions go some way towards refining the idea, but a strict focus on things digital offers less possibility for understanding proletarianization rather than more, because privatism seen as cyberculture may miss the point. Nevertheless, Brian Massumi's suggestion that digital invention "precedes and produces its own possibility" is evocative of how the Internet has generated something entirely new, namely "the direct registering of potential."[16] In Mussumi's view, the rich layering of potential is built on abstractions of the post-human that is made possible by our interaction with the virtual. Proletarianization imagines that potential in so far as it offers the sensations of the other, those seeking emancipation in and through the Internet.

Uprisings abound

In Alfonso Cuaròn's 2007 movie, *Children of Men*, the word "Uprising" appears as graffiti in scenes where hundreds of illegal immigrants to the UK are staring out from behind wire mesh as they await deportation. Nearby, resistance fighters work to get a young black woman as the last remaining fertile woman on earth to safety and thus assure the survival of the human species. The title of this book was in place before *Children of Men* appeared, yet it was reassuring to see in the darkness of a Boston cinema a statement that combined despair and hope and confirmed my own fears. Similarly, the film *V for Vendetta* tapped into some of those emotions. As suggested in that film and somewhat more angrily in Alan Moore's graphic novel of the same name, a new Guy Fawkes helps concentrate the mind by drawing attention to the vanguardists who are everywhere, especially on computer monitors, presenting their own revolts in real time. But uprisings are not restricted to the cinema, pop culture or to an abstract world somewhere else far away from the comforts of home. They are here and there, empowered by technology, by the immediacy of communication technology and by the pressures of unjust power, despair and debauchery that mobilize proletarianization. Many of the behaviors and attitudes are troubling, apparently immature and uncompromising, "Beyond the pale," as polite company might put it. But as history and the struggles of people everywhere suggest, this, as always, is no time for polite company.

15.Erikson, E (1968) Identity, Youth and Crisis, New York: Norton.

16.Massumi, B, (2002) Parables for the Virtual, Duke University Press, Durham: Duke University Press: 96-97.

This is not to suggest that polite company would accept proletarianization, even though there is little that can be done about it. On February 6, 2001, *Wall Street Journal* Opinion writer Charles Murray expressed an alternative position to that adopted in this book. In "Prole Models," Murray raised the flag of American middle class anxiety, when he wrote: "We are witnessing the proletarianization of the dominant minority."[17] At one level he was maintaining the paranoid style that defines American politics, according to Richard Hofstadter.[18] This is the paranoia carried with uncertainty by those who have gained so much through dubious means and who fear and resist the change that will take it from them. At another level, Murray drew attention to the dirt and dross of popular culture and its media progenitors. Quoting Arnold Toynbee, one of the documentarians of polite society, Murray mused about "the disintegration of civilization." This distressing loss of standards, said Murray, had been brought about by the underclass whose media influence had brought about "a collapse of the code of the elites." These included "the code of the gentleman" and that of the lady. Murray's point was that the elites "have been infected by 'the sickness of proletarianization'," with the result that established codes in society have collapsed. For Murray and those of his ilk, the codes are those that should keep the elites in place and the dirt where it belongs.

Murray's fear about the impact of new cultural and social power on the established elites of the world points his paranoia to the larger ideological issue that the Internet presents: proletarianization is a tool with which to map the emergence of the Internet and the taken-for-granted meanings of "ladies and gentlemen." After the eruptions of September 11, 2001, it would be difficult to imagine someone like Murray thinking in any gentlemanly or civilized way about jihadists or pornographers. Indeed, for Murray and his ilk - the neo-conservatives and George W. Bush along with tens of millions of people around the world - proletarianization is an uprising that needs to be crushed. For the rest of civilization the uprising needs to be understood with the clarity with which it streams over our computer monitors, as a counterpoint to Murray's perception of this world.

The Proletarianization Thesis

Writing about proletarianization in the context of the Internet may suggest to some readers a backward looking recourse to an analysis that peaked in October 1917. Nothing could be further from the truth. In getting to the truth, this book employs a polysemic reading of proletarianization, informed in turn by postmodern readings of cultural and economic diffusion and a media context that is defined by multivariate proliferations of inform-

17. Murray, Charles, "Prole Models," WSJ.com, Opinion Journal, http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/ Accessed June 2005.

18. Hofstadter, Richard (1965) The Paranoid Style in American Politics and other essays, Knopf, New York.

ation and knowledge, where everything abounds. This diffusion of possibilities for human activity still means that clear goals need to be set for emancipation.

The most persuasive US marker of proletarianization in and around class has been the work of sociologist Charles Tilly. In 1979 he proposed a core definition: "Proletarianization is the set of processes that increases the number of people who lack control over the means of production, and who survive by selling their labor power."[19] And later, "Proletarianization is an increase in the number of workers who depend for survival on the sale of their labor power, a decrease in the number of workers who exert substantial direct control over the means of production."[20] In a classical Marxist sense the proletariat or working class is a social and economic formation that has traversed a number of iterations since the emergence of capitalist relations. As such, proletarianization has been an idea about the fundamental economics of relationships within capitalism. Any discussion about the political economy of everyday life has tended to include economic questions that offer just one way to evaluate class. Other constituents of proletarianization have been excluded. Culture offers another way to add to theories of proletarianization. Both approaches are open to sets of relationships that suffered, as Tilly noted, because sociology offered "no coherent account of proletarianization's causes, forms and consequences." To which he added: "The problem resides in bad theory."[21]

The solution to this theory failure in sociology suggested Tilly, was to take up the challenge of Marxist history. Models created by Marxist historians "always feature power, exploitation, coercion, struggle," which reflect the truth of the process by which proletarianization occurs.[22] In the chapter on the relationship between class and technology I look at the rise of Marxist models that help explain proletarianization. However, what they cannot do is adequately work through the new complexity of proletarianization in the digitally globalized era, even while central ideas that explain Marxist history such as moral economy remain crucial and relevant to the project, as I make clear in Chapter 2. Here, the analysis is driven by the new complexity – globalization running hard in tandem with privatism. Both concerns are joined at the hip by neoliberalism that offers a perspective on human relations that moves through failed sociological theory to sug-

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19. Tilly, C. (1979) Proletarianization: Theory and Research: 2-3 Available at University of Michigan Deep Blue, Accessed 21 January 2009: 2-3. URL at edu/bitstream/2027.42/50976/1/202.pdf

20. Tilly, C. (1979) Proletarianization: Theory and Research: 2-3 Available at University of Michigan Deep Blue, Accessed 21 January 2009: 2-3. URL at edu/bitstream/2027.42/50976/1/202.pdf

21. Tilly, (1979)) Proletarianization: Theory and Research. Available at University of Michigan Deep Blue, Accessed 21 January 2009: 2-3.

22. Tilly, (1979) Proletarianization: Theory and Research. Available at University of Michigan Deep Blue, Accessed 21 January 2009: 13.

gest other ways of conceiving the new international systems of communication. In contrast, neo-conservatism proffers neo-liberalism as the best of all worlds to its critics, while a more complicated perspective is that neo-liberalism offers possibilities for proletarianization's emergence because of its global dimensions. As Christian Fuchs suggested, "Cooperative cyberculture... is based on values, ideas, and structures of sharing and building relationships ...competitive cyberculture is based on values, ideas, and structures that erect borders, construct classes, and separate people... Cooperative cyberculture is based on the idea of unity in diversity ... competitive cyberculture on the ideas of unity without diversity and diversity without unity...[23] Incorporating these contradictory aspects of the world within the proletarianization reading of the Internet extends critical work by enhancing the range of available theory, without falling into the trap of limiting our inquiry to the universalizing claims of cyberculture.[24]

An additional challenge is to recognize that influential discussion about proletarianization - such as Murray's above - has been directed at downward economic and social pressure on the middle class as a result of neo-liberalism's globalization: the wage arbitrage game played so effectively by corporate profit seekers. One way to consider this subject is through the "proletarianization thesis" which considers the argument that becoming a wage and salary earning professional (within a nationalized health system for example) represents a loss of autonomy. This is the point around which definitions rise and fall. One notable proponent of this view is Frank Parkin whose book *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois View*, does what Tilly identified as the problem of sociology: spend inordinate energy discussing categorizations of class, without adequately explaining the social and economic relations of power that exist to bring class formations about.[25] Parkin sees the proletarianization thesis as derived from Max Weber, as professional and semi-professional workers are outraged by the loss of their autonomy. "The proletarianization thesis assumes the existence of a gold age of semi-professional independence now abruptly shattered by newly imposed external controls."[26] Curiously, this book and Tilly's article were both published in 1979, before a brief upsurge of discussion on the thesis, which then disappeared in line with changes in work patterns, the demise of Marxist class analysis and a general lack of enthusiasm for and fear about

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23. Fuchs, C. (2008) Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Internet Age, Routledge, London, p. 333.

24. Baym, N. (2005, Ed.) "Special Issue: ICT Research and Disciplinary Boundaries: Is "Internet Research" a Virtual Field, a Proto-Discipline, or Something Else?" The Information Society, Vol. 21, No. 4.

25. Parkin, F. (1979) Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois View, Columbia University Press, New York.

26. Parkin, F. (1979) Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois View, Columbia University Press, New York: 106.

the complexities of downward mobility.[27] Interestingly, downward pressure on middle class wages and spending power has been reinvigorated with the world recession of 2008-2009 and the shift of middle class work out of the US.

Equally relevant for my purposes is that economists like Michael Hudson and Paul Krugman the latter writing opinion-editorials in *The New York Times* came to see what neo-classical economics had taught them. They worked hard to expose the pathological inability of their profession to discuss the implications of proletarianization: a much larger working class or proletariat in the developed world.[28] Concerns about downward pressure on the middle class are of profound moment, not least because of the rise of The Tea Party in the US in 2010. As I discuss in the chapters on deregulation as well as ideology and class, capital's ideological foundations are constructed around deeply embedded myths of upward economic advancement linked to the sanctity of work. The fact that the original European discoveries and settlements of British colonies - the Americas and Australia - involved decimation of native peoples was, as Howard Zinn and others have argued, an expression of a kind of ennobling morality that is connected with the Manifest Destiny of an upward trajectory of progress, wealth accumulation and security.[29] To think, to even imagine a reversal of that narrative towards proletarianization is to undo lengthy histories of colonial advancement.

Downward pressure has become palpable. In the contemporary globalization era, economic shifts that produce realignments in wealth will become more important to considerations of labor. This is especially pertinent to China which became the world's third largest economy in January 2009 and is expected to be the worlds largest just before 2030.[30] Elsewhere in the world, before the recession of 2008-2009, former peasants in China, India and anywhere else they could be organized into labor, became wage earners in factories that opened and closed based on developed world consumer spending, most of which was founded on unsustainable credit. The growth patterns of Brazil and Russia in addition to China and India establish new nodes of activity that expand capitalism and with it the process of proletarianization. The consequences for a more nuanced understanding of the economistic aspects of proletarianization are that capital's selective global expansion incorporates more of the globe's people into productive relations, while it generates a gross reduction in well being, income, purchasing power

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27. Halford, S. and Savage. M. (1995) "The Bureaucratic Career: Demise or Adaptation," in (eds) Butler, T, and Savage, M. Social Change and the Middle Classes, Routledge, London: 117-132.

28. MacFarquhar, Larissa (2010) "The Deflationist," The New Yorker, March 1.

29. Zinn, Howard (1995) A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present, New York: Harper Collins.

30. Boston Globe (2009) "China now world's 3d-largest economy," January 15: 12.

and living standards. As Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union in the US pointed out, since 2000, overall production in the US grew by about 20 percent, while real income fell about 3 per cent.[31]

Unlike Stern, I do not advocate increasing living standards within the prevailing model of consumerism. Rather proletarianization will need to theorize "no growth" within a radical reading of sustainability that will include the reorganization of power within new global relationship that are enhanced by the Internet. Challenges to established ideas of growth will be part of many other emerging theoretical efforts. It is not a focus of this one. That is to say that the developed world's reliance on credit (cards, home equity loans and a failed tide of financial instruments) is an important part of the changing terrain in which the Internet plays a part in enhancing the flow of knowledge about economic wellbeing, opportunity and political restructuring. Arriving at this position is relatively easy as I write this amidst the long decline of the US Empire. From 1918 until 2008 the conceits of US-based consumerism and the ideology that encased it with the cheery innocence of a fantastic political machine were carefully constructed around liberalism. But as credit lines and material fantasies often became phantoms, informed commentary kicked in. Andrew Bacevich a Boston University military analyst got the better of the description when he wrote in April 2009: "The history of American liberalism is one of promoting substantively radical reforms in order to refurbish and sustain the status quo... in this sense, modern liberalism's great achievement has been to deflect or neutralize calls for more fundamental change..."[32] Political philosopher John Rawls struggled with the implications of this type of veiling in his work, without offering suggestions for the logical outcome of liberalism's status quoism. And why should he? For liberals to lift the veil and see behind it is to realize that proletarianization is true. A huge amount of energy has gone into the permanent reconstruction of the veils that hide proletarianization, while in the age of Internet communications, the availability of knowledge about the abject is actively circulated.

This book recognizes the way neo-liberalism has created the conditions under which shifts in wealth and opportunity have been structured within the prevailing political economy. In Europe especially, the "700 euro generation" (G700) understands that they, as young people, have been given almost no access to the riches of the world, because that is not how globalization works.[33] The Greek riots of December 2008 were as much a response

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31. Stern, A. (2009) "Unions Can help close the income gap," Boston Globe, 18 January: C9.

32. Bacevich, A. (2009) "Obama's sins of omission," The Boston Globe, Opinion, April 25: A11. Reproduced at Counterpunch, April 26, 2009, URL at http://www.counterpunch.org/bacevich04272009.html

33. Kaimaki, V. (2009) Mass uprising of Greece's youth,"La Monda Diplomatique, January. Accessed 1 January 2009, URL at http://mondediplo.com/2009/01/06-greece

to the pointless gunning down murder of a 16 year old boy by the police as frustration and revolt at a hopeless situation.

The distinguishing characteristic of the dominant discourse about downward pressure is that it is a picture created by middle class Caucasian males. This position is gradually changing, as I point out in the chapters on pornography and the jihad. Women and Moslems are enjoying opportunities to remake the domination of western white males by being a significant part of proletarianization. How this new formation operates can be explained by the rise of jihadism which is situated within post-colonial visions of greatness. Jihadism also has a troubling counterpoint – a new anti-cosmopolitanism. I use ideological grooming to describe how the Internet allows jihadism to be uniquely articulated to proletarianization's propulsion into the foreground of the global struggle for power and recognition.

At another level, David Noble drew attention to the relationship between proletarianization and technology in his stunningly prescient 1977 book, *America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism*. Noble suggested that proletarianization was a moment in US history when "technological progress and social control" went hand in hand to produce "a technocracy run by and for the technical elite, according to the cold compulsion of technical reason."[34] He argued that proletarianization defined the "public subsidization of private enterprise" within a corporate order, then went further to suggest that struggles about class and technology could not be buried in a "myth of classlessness, no 'end of ideology' ideology."[35] These concerns continue even now as part of the challenge of theory building which sees proletarianization not as a denunciation of the underclass or the subaltern or workers, but as an opportunity to remake the social order precisely because of the Internet.

Proletarianization – Internet Studies, Culture, Political Economy

This book recognizes that the emergence of proletarianization through the Internet is a step towards a reconfiguration of class, identity and technology, of new forms of empowerment and new challenges to political organization. It is a new political economy. As such, a book like this cannot answer all the questions. It can propose avenues down which researchers could move. The theory of proletarianization proposed here incorporates my hope that it will be a resource for continuing research and progressive political activism.

There are many areas I cannot consider. For example, I cannot adequately explain or describe what has been called the "global subproletariat," or the "world's undesired," even though these terms suggest core

34. Noble, David (1977) America by Design. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 322.

35. Noble, David (1977) America by Design. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 324.

constituents of proletarianization.[36] The pursuit of social and economic justice across all sorts of intermingled intellectual and material territories and disciplines is the benchmark. Part of the challenge is to explain the way so many people have become abject because they are never exploited. They have no utility whatsoever, yet they have the Internet. That is part of the story of the subproletariat and the abject. Furthermore, Etienne Balibar's "zones of life and death"[37] are another part of the story, while proletarianization as it is used here includes questions about failing boundaries that Balibar emphasizes when he suggests a "democratization of borders."[38] The Internet pushes this kind of concept to its extreme. The Internet rejects borders that are materially informed and intentionally mobilized by injustice. While it offers a fresh notion of abjection, it offers access to the world as well, all of which occurs within the proletarianization process.

All of these considerations cannot be incorporated into the research and the question that drives the central concerns of this book: how does the Internet contribute to proletarianization? I use a transdisciplinary approach that identifies transgressive knowledge as the key constituent of proletarianization to show how it is reconfigured. (I detail this approach in chapter 2.) In other words, the Internet has produced a new rendering of an old term. In offering this approach I am seeking to identify, describe and theorize the way the people claim emancipation through the Internet.

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36. "Rights for a global subproletariat," This Tuesday: logs on migration, labor, transnational organizing, Accessed 22 January 2009, URL at http://www.thistuesday.org/node/56

37. "The Rights of Migrant workers," Indymedia, Accessed 22 January 2009, URL at http://romania.indymedia.org/en/2004/08/416.shtml

38. Balibar, E. (2001) "Outlines of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Cruelty in the Era of Global Violence," Constellations, Vol. 8, No. 1: 15-29: 16.

Chapter 2
Internet Ideology Anxiety

> "Missile off e-Bay, launcher remains"
> London: A British man trying to sell a deactivated Soviet-era missile on e-Bay was forced to delete it after staff contacted him for breaching company rules. They told him to remove the missile because he broke eBay regulation by listing it alongside its vehicle launcher, which should have appeared as a separate item.[1]

The Internet is a challenge to civil society. It has unleashed ideological forces that create cracks and crevasses, challenging civility and security. Its "social morphology" has brought about transformations in social life that are reproducing new forms of organization, conflict and fear.[2] The transformations are welcomed by many, yet, as Manuel Castells noted in the context of the global networked society the risks make "the management of anxiety [is] the most useful personal skill."[3] An investigation of my own anxieties is the premise of this book, which is a sense that the emerging and unfamiliar ideologies that are morphing and presenting themselves on the

1. Metro, Boston (2005) January 27:1

2. Castells, Manuel (2000) "Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society," British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 51 (1): 5-24: 5-6

3. Castells, Manual (2000) "Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society," British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 51 (1): 5-24: 21

Internet are forces that structure how we live and work. If we are engaged in the pursuit of civility many of these forces need to be documented, resisted and managed. Many of these forces have been dormant or suppressed since the Enlightenment when concepts about rationality "organized" civil society. With the shift in social organization that accompanied the Enlightenment the irrationality of the underclass was pushed aside to make way for the bourgeois revolution, which is really a type of orderliness, in which civil interactions were managed and controlled. In contrast, non-bourgeois interests were seen as inferior by the newly educated leaders of society and the institutions they promoted, heralding the democratic state and the associated legal and regulatory apparatus. When Enlightenment thinkers opened the door to what is generically considered rational order, the uneducated and unreasonable saw their interests fade, because their interests were collective, disorderly, ungoverned and ungovernable. At least this is one broad brush stroke of the change that emerged with the idea of the Enlightenment, which had as many streams of interpretation as there once were principalities of Germany.

Emanuel Kant put one key way of conceptualizing this way of thinking on the map when he argued in *The Critique of Practical Reason*, that rational behavior will produce "virtue and happiness," which is really about self control or what Kant referred to as "a consciousness of mastery over one's inclinations."[4] If it is indeed the case that modern society has this consciousness of itself and thus civility, why is the world not overflowing with virtue and happiness? If we have built rational systems of belief and action for the organization of society, then shouldn't we be approaching utopia? After all the advances in science and individual rights within divergent models of democracy since the Enlightenment, why does rationality seem like a foolish notion? Shouldn't the world have achieved a sense of accomplishment, constituted through civilized debate, where excessive inclinations are managed, controlled and directed into morally virtuous acts? And shouldn't the rationality of knowledge production within networked information technology and computer processing have created even more virtue and happiness? For its part, surely the Internet should have created a new order of rationality, given that it is constructed on all that engineering and mathematical brilliance? By now a new world order of logic in ones and zeros should be everyday. As Michael Lewis pointed out during the Dot Com era, in 1921 Thorstein Veblen claimed that engineers would rule the world through what we could now consider a kind of digital exceptionalism, as their unique mathematically structured rational logic organized communication, commerce and culture and took control of society from the financiers and industry captains.[5] In this picture of Veblen and Lewis, engineers embody ra-

4.Kant, Imanuel (1788) The Critique of Pure Reason. Forgotten Books, www.forgottenbooks. Com, (2008): 99, 103.

5.Lewis, Michael (2000) The New New Thing: A Silicon Valley Story. New York: WW Norton and Company: 33.

tionality. According to Kant and Veblen, we should have followed them into virtue and happiness.

An investigation of the changing sense of rationality and irrational counter forces enables an inquiry that produces informed questions about notions of rationality in the context of the Internet's social morphology. Furthermore, assuming that the ideological forces that emerge through the Internet are expressions of engineering rationality, the converse should also be assumed, namely that other levels of hyperrationality and irrationality are also present. In this chapter I will suggest some ways in which these concerns about intellectual history inform anxiety about the Internet and the possibilities for theory building. I will outline some methodological considerations based on the transdisciplinary approach as well as suggest ways to see proletarianization within moral economy.

Disciplinary Conclusions

New ideological forces at play in society include those that have previously been either suppressed by the state apparatus of law and regulation or simply hidden from view. These new forces are not abstract powers circulating in a sort of mythical space far removed from everyday concerns. They are real, material and experiential. Due to the Internet they have found a place to present themselves to new publics – at least to those people connected to the network of global computers. And while much has been made of the power of the Internet to show how economies, financial transactions and media are deployed, much less has been made of the circulation of previously hidden cultures and their power as organizing mechanisms for new social and economic relations.

The two somewhat hidden cultures that provoked this inquiry are pornography and jihadist terror. Any similarity between the two is not immediately evident. Indeed, when proposing the idea of bringing these two formations together in a talk at the Technology and Society conference in Berkeley in 2005, a British philosopher in the audience disagreed with the fundamental proposition that the two formations could be discussed in the same context: one is a private act between consenting adults while the other is a tactic used in a state of war. There is no equivalence between these two representations, the Philosopher King acidly pronounced. Such disciplinary towers are thwarted by the implosive transdisciplinary challenge of the Internet: the Internet refuses disciplinary categories by offering transgressive knowledge and action. When viewed as separate cultural representations there is no obvious relationship between pornography and jihadism. Superficially, my English colleague was right to say that they should not be discussed in the same context. But the Internet does the work for us. Somewhat like Freudian and Lacanian psychotherapy, where the unconscious operates as a "chaotic realm of constantly shifting drives and desires" to become "continually circulating chains of meaning" the Internet brings together otherwise unrelated expressions of human behavior that have previ-

ously been managed by continued tacit references to Enlightenment civility: the Internet presents them problematically in the same electronic context.[6] We may not like the similarity of the context, but the appeal for separate spheres of logical continuity is a hollow claim from linear philosopher minds. Such minds are operating in the space of the rational Enlightenment, which has been superseded by the new structures of Internet relationships. Scott Lash has argued that the networked world we inhabit is one where "informationization" dominates, making it impossible for previous categories of "inside" and "outside" the Internet to exist.[7] Everything in the media and cultural space is in a shared place, argued Lash. This kind of claim accompanied a lot of Internet bubble writing which had the appeal of bright new potential about it, but was too eager to jettison human history by climbing into the bubble. My view is that human history and social relations remain grounded in the Enlightenment and its ideas of civility that inform emancipation, while the Internet refuses such logic. Informationization can be viewed as the expression of a somewhat over enthusiastic, even excited attempt to move beyond the material world that we inhabit and need to change.

Having said this it should be acknowledged that appeals to rationality create their own pitfalls while offering insights into the ideological territory the Internet has opened up. For example, Lawrence Lessig pointed out the legal challenges associated with the shifting tide of public and private intercourse.

> Always there is competition between the public and private: always the rights of the private must be balanced against the interests of the public. Always a choice must be made about how far each side will be allowed to reach. *These questions are inherently questions of public law*: How will a particular constellation of constitutional values be reckoned? How will a balance be struck in particular factual contexts? (Italics added).[8]

As a lawyer, he is totally correct. As a seeker after the light of global communications in a complex world, he is partially correct and therefore partially wrong. What is assumed in the legal mindset is a system of checks and balances that obligingly follow the constructions of human choice as devised by generations of rationally driven, Enlightenment-centric lawyers and law makers (not to mention lobbyists) who often determine what the laws look like. Neat intellectual packaging drawn from a legal point of view that pursues the balance of justice is more difficult to construct in the Internet era because rationality no longer works the way it once did, even while it is the benchmark for human interactions. In short, Lessig provides an example of

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6. Mary Klages, "Jacques Lacan." http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/lacan.html

7. Lash, Scott (2002) Critique of Information. London: Sage Publications: 10.

8. Lessig, Lawrence (1999) Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace. New York: Basic Books: 187.

the limits of rational legalism, as I discuss in the chapter on telecommunication policy reform, in the discussion of the public sphere and in the chapter on Enlightenment and the Internet.

What about Kant?

Perhaps it has always been the case that the universal laws of humanity were constructed in such a way that Kant could merrily offer what University of San Diego philosopher Laurence Hinman called a path to "a certain kind of moral safety in an uncertain world."[9] Similarly, Alain Badiou's suggestion that Kant's thought was organized around three questions points to the depth of his insights within a rational, Enlightenment formation: "What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?"[10] These are beautiful questions. However, while they are all well and good in the context of "practical reason," the Internet does not allow for what could be considered a kind of conceit of rationality. Unfortunately, the Internet provokes precisely the break from rationality that Lash invoked in his discussion of informationization, while obliterating neither reason nor knowledge.

Frankly then, contemporary life does not allow for Kantian luxuries, even while Kantian ideals persist in civil society. In order to manage this multiplicity of potentials, it is helpful to be reminded of what Louis Althusser suggested in another era, that we must create continents of knowledge out of theory building.[11] It seems that we are better placed than ever to do this and in doing so explore the terrain that exposes "the crisis of critical, rational idealism."[12] That presupposes a research project where the crisis of rational idealism is worthy of our concern. Surely the continent of this exploration is a land where hyperrationality coexists with the everyday garden variety of common sense reason? There are continents of rationalities. This includes the hyperrationality of computer miniaturization which is a quantum remove from the everyday rationality and associated behavior that might define something like civil society. All forms of rationality coexist, but when they are added to a civil society model in relation to the Internet, the task of comprehension is doubly complicated.

One way to navigate this continent of potential is the turn to ethics, which demands that we ask for more than a typology of human science and behavior within an Enlightenment model. Ethics demands that we under-

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9. Hinman, Laurence (2006) "Immanuel Kant and the Ethics of Duty," 30 November. URL http://philosophy.illinoisstate.edu/phi101/deutsch/kant,dutyanduniversality.pdf

10. Badiou, Alain (2003) On Beckett, Edited and translated by Alberto Toscano and Nina Power. Manchester: Clinamen Press: 2.

11. Althusser, Louis (2003) The Humanist Controversy and Other Writings. London: Verso: 199.

12. Althusser, Louis (2003) The Humanist Controversy and Other Writings, London: Verso: 8.

stand what part of the continent of theory we are exploring and what heritage we encounter as we make our exploration. How do we respond to a range of diverse sensations that are constructed out of social lives that are simultaneously buoyed and broken by economics, communication possibilities and narratives of the self and the everyday whose meanings appear to be incomprehensible? If ethics has any place in contemporary society it may be to return comprehensibility to the incomprehensible, by asking for a pause in the sensations that make the Internet such a potent force. Recognizing the ethical turn is to take the moment to stop – which is precisely against the Internet's sensational immediacy. It is to try to achieve what John Commons and institutional economists refer to as the "automatic harmony of interests," that will never be achievable yet which sensitize us to the fact that "social conflict has always been and always will be a fundamental fact in the progress of mankind."[13] To be ethical is to admit the range of rationalities that are embodied in the Internet as necessary constituents of the continents of theory that are contesting each other on the pathway to human progress. To reduce these competing interests to a limited vision of rationality would be to walk away from an obligation to analyze the truth games that are necessary in order to understand the relationship between individuals within society.[14]

Such a high minded proposition would be fine if the Internet had not collapsed rationality into a semblance of discontinuous micro-narratives that have sensational meaning yet appear to be ultimately vacuous. In cyberspeak the micro-narratives are virtual in the sense that they are delivered in real time yet they exist in a digital form and find representation on a screen or monitor where they are reproduced and interpreted by the user. How they are produced is a matter of great concern, because as images, film or sound they are substantially more than data – they are cultural artifacts. What the user does with them is as controversial as the way in which they are produced. However, the speed with which virtual matter is generated leaves little room for such distanced reflection (ethics) on the process of their production.

The nature of our inquiry then has to be about the creation of knowledge, not just its consumption and the actions that are embodied in that knowledge. Once again, the ethical turn demands the necessity of a "stop and look" engagement. The question is: who wants to be the party pooper? Who wants to stop the speeding virtual wonderland of all possibilities coming into the desktop, hand held mobile device, the television, the converged digital state of things? Readers familiar with Frankfurt School dystopians like Theodore Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and company

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13. Whalen, Charles (2008) "John R. Commons and John Maynard Keynes on economic history and policy: the 1920s and today," Journal of Economic Issues. Vol. 42 (1): 225.

14. Foucault, Michel (1994) "Technologies for the Self," in Ethics: Subjectivity and truth. In (Ed) P. Rabinow, New York: The New Press: 224.

will recognize the heritage of this pessimism about the production and consumption of technology-mediated culture, yet recognize that the anxiety is not about industrialization and the challenges of commodification, but about the new ideologies that reframe our existence because of the Internet.

Unsurprisingly, new cultural forms get a bad rap, not because of the Frankfurt School approach, but because new cultural expression is generally characterized in a negative light, described by "moral panic." And for good reason: some cultural activities when articulated with new technologies rapidly force any existing map of reasonable interpretations onto another plane as the previously managed extremes – the non-Enlightenment rationality – moves into circulation. Fear drives the response and rightly so. Fear is more palpable and powerful when the new culture invades private space, such as when it came into the regulated domestic space of the family sitting room through the television in the 1940s. Here the new culture is invested with a salience that many objective observers would now find amusing. What damage could Elvis Presley possible do by swinging his hips on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1956? No one knew, so the safe option was for the television broadcaster (CBS) not to show those licentious gyrations. This was a rational choice about the construction of a set of moral and behavioral norms that television executives believed should be upheld. Their job as media executives (gatekeepers) was to make the choice for consumers and therefore assert that their best interests would be served by making a judgment that protected the interests of television watchers. Everybody could sleep well because the executive decision making process was based on choices that took place in a trusted and rational environment. Avoiding the moral panic that might raise questions about executive competency was part of the rational choice that society relied on to drive the behavior of the broadcaster.

Soon enough the claim for exposure to the gyrations of Elvis forced the executives to decide that the moral panic was in fact less important than the passionate responses by fans of the music. The television station would reap the benefits of seeing the passion of the marketplace as a result of Elvis's simulation of sexual action. Choices were remade and Elvis rotated accordingly.

In a contradictory way the struggle to make sense of newness reinforces tradition. Like a broken bone healing more strongly than the original, so the strength of the linkages from the new to existing forms of cultural production builds and brings the panicked into a place where they feel comfortable. Sooner or later everyone seems to love Elvis: he is no longer "dangerous" and is incorporated into everything that is acceptable. He is both historicized in the long view of history and he is normalized within culture as understandings of rationality and morality shift to accommodate new thresholds of human behavior.

The Internet Threshold

When William of Ockham said ("Pluralitas non est ponenda sine neccesitate") "entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily" he was making an early observation about scientific method. "Ockham's Razor" became philosophical shorthand for reductionism. Unfortunately, the Internet has left Ockham and his razor in the dust. The Internet's foundations in hyper-rationality empower multiplication of anything that can be digitized with powerful and sometimes panicked responses. Take this one from *The New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman:

> What was happening around Israel at the height of the intifada was that the Arab *multimedia* explosion was taking the images of that intifada explosion and feeding them to the Arab population explosion, melding in the minds of a new generation of Arabs and Muslims that their enemies were J.I.A. - "Jews, Israel and America." That is *an enormously toxic trend*, and I hope Israel's withdrawal from Gaza will help deprive it of oxygen (Italics added).[15]

Here is an expression of the rational order of things rejecting the new digital order. Why? Friedman's framework consists of a rational world order where democracy is built in a controlled laboratory, not the unanticipated feeding of the masses by the masses in a multimedia landscape. (Even though this column was about the need to immediately shut down the US Government's Guantanamo Bay prison.) Friedman's anxiety about the order of things digital is a comment on the idea that the *availability* of communications technologies opens the door to a new continent of irrational anarchy. Unfortunately, J.I.A.s are a target for large proportion of the world's population. No appeal to rational logic will put this "toxicity" of hatred back in its box. And the leading engine for this new set of challenges comes from networked communications technologies, most notably digitized material sent over the Internet. What appeal can Enlightenment rationality have in this context?

Curiously, the Enlightenment can be seen as the greatest force humankind created for social mobility. The concept of a constant and incremental shift in logical progressive human action would continue as long as knowledge was actively produced and is the milk of developmental civilization. The change *sans* change idea is indeed powerful, evocative and empowering. The problem was that the change was always upward, always forward and progressive, an imagined humanistic trajectory away from the slime and sweat of everyday labor. The Internet has, as it were, brought back the slime. It has offered us material that was and is suitable for the gutter. It has poisoned public life and private imaginations in ways that bring hope to billions of people.

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15. Friedman, Thomas (2005) "Just Shut it Down," The New York Times. May 27, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/27/opinion/27friedman.html?ex=1117857600&en=223315b65ba82791&ei=5070

Mapping Methods

My interest is in drawing a conceptual map which describes the suppression of proletarian behavior and its "emancipation" through the Internet.[16] Much more than technoboosterish optimists who invoke networked technology as the realization of individuality - the ideology of unlimited consumerist plug and play - the Internet reveals the other side of the map, where culture is emancipated, in a new type of proletarianization. Internet culture seen from this perspective understands the production, distribution and consumption of private behavior on the Internet in contradistinction to the endless abundance of the flow of digital stuff. Proletarianization circulates on the Internet without the regulations that have previously suppressed it. Proletarianization is the move of otherwise unregulated behavior via the Internet to the monitor space, where it is sometimes reproduced as a commodity in the market, but may just as equally find its value only in its social function, not in any market-based exchange value. Of course, as soon as this effort at evading exchange value appears, it brings into stark relief the fact that proletarianization exists because of the market. It is a function of the market economy. Within this complex of intersections it does little good to focus on media representations, when the political economy of the Internet reveals multiple articulations, complex social and material relationships and multivariate constituents that undermine singular theory building. This means theorizing the Internet has the appearance of moving into a corner of Althusser's continents, without any knowledge of where the borders are and then being overwhelmed by its multi-level constituents that unmake rationality even while we remain wihin the history of Kantian reason.

The resolution of this conceptual challenge has been suggested by the transdisciplinary approach of The Salzburg School of ICT.[17] Advocates for "The Salzburg Approach" have argued that a transdisciplinary approach is required as much for practical reasons as for critical reasons: to comprehend the scope of Information and Communication Technologies in society. That is, because it cannot be defined by discipline derived concepts from discrete fields, the Internet demands an *open theoretical domain*, where theories rise in an amalgam from social networking, Web 2.0, virtual communities and media intertextuality to coalesce in transdisciplinarity.

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16. As I discuss in several different locations in this book, I use "proletarian" as shorthand for all social and economic practices that necessarily fall between the cracks of any definition of class or culture. In chapter 5 I discuss the way the abject extends and muddies still further any clarity about class definitions.

17. Hofkirchner, Wolfgang, Fuchs, C., Raffl, C., Schafranek, M., Sandoval, M., Bichler, R., (2007) ICTs and Society: The Salzburg Approach. URL athttp://tcts.sbg.ac.at/media/pdf/pdf1490.pdf

> A transdiscipline is expected to bridge several gaps: the gap between the two cultures of (natural) science and social and human sciences as well as the gap between specialists and generalists as well as the gap between applied research and basic research.[18]

The Salzburg approach promotes the non-classifiable characteristics of disciplines that transect the natural sciences and the humanities through the dynamics of the Internet's converged concerns. The most appealing feature of Salzburg research orientation is the restatement of the claim made by Helga Nowotny and Michael Gibbons that because "transdisciplinarity does not respect institutional boundaries" its "knowledge is transgressive".[19] I take this proposition much further, utilizing it to argue that the rule breaking function of knowledge production within and through the Internet mobilizes the transdisciplinary approach through transgressive knowledge. As I will suggest, the obsolescence of institutional structures in tandem with the rational claims to principles that have been codified in society and continue in metastasized form in institutions, suggest that the transgressive view of knowledge production operates across what already exists and what is coming into view. The inherent dynamic of transgressive knowledge is part of the lengthy unsettled history of the intersection of knowledge and technology in society, observed most effectively in Michael Adas's and Leo Marx's many contributions.[20]

Transdisciplinarity is the stated recognition of complexity and the challenge that the Internet poses to established disciplines, and of the general inability of interdisciplinarity to fill in the gaps. Surely the transgressions of Internet knowledge need a theory that admits the old and the new. In this respect, Ned Rossiter has offered "processual media theory" as a way of incorporating the already existing with the transgressive newness of the Internet. The appeal of processual media theory is that it is inherently transdisciplinary because it points out how "the unthought media of aesthetics" are constituted, where "social and cultural forms are not determined by media potentialities."

> A processual aesthetics of new media goes beyond what is simply seen or represented on screen. It seeks to identify how online practices are always conditioned by and articulated with seemingly invisible forces, institutional desires

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18. The Salzburg group suggests the influence of John Brockman's "Third Culture," (1995) which is enmeshed within a kind of high Darwinian rationality that is dependent on detailed scientific analysis, although it's radical claim is a refusal of established teleological knowledge systems. http://www.edge.org/documents/ThirdCulture/d-Contents.html

19. Gibbons Michael and Nowotny, Helga (2002) "The Potential of Transdisciplinarity,": 7, cited in Hifkirchner et. al. 2007: 12.

20. Cowan, Ruth Schwartz (2010) "Looking Back in Order to Move Forward: John McDermott, "Technology: The Opiate of the Intellectuals"," Technology and Culture. Vol. 51 (1): 199-215.

> and regimes of practice. Furthermore, a processual aesthetics recognizes the material and embodied dimensions of Net cultures.[21]

While there may be questions to ask about what aesthetics means here, the key point refers back to transgressive knowledge, because the processual approach can "consider the technics of combining visual and tactile perceptions in certain ways and in certain contexts to allow for distinct modes of understanding the world."[22] Such understanding emerges from a commitment to see transgressive knowledge as the actions that constitute proletarianization and thus move beyond the limitations of aesthetics.

The Internet offers new and renewed modes of understanding proletarianization, as something that has previously been invisible. This is the point of the challenge of transgressive knowledge: it simultaneously deconstructs what is already known about the world while offering building blocks to new knowledge and potential embodiment, as it reveals the process of production and consumption, offering them with renewed utility. (This is not to dismiss those living in poverty who cannot and do not have the Internet and all its hardware devices – however they too are increasingly engaged in and connected to the network). As suggested earlier, the Internet reveals the proletarian knowledge that the Enlightenment regulated through its focus on individual growth within the bourgeois revolution.

To achieve a richer understanding of transgressive knowledge, several sites where technology and knowledge have been given new social and political value in recent decades offer building blocks that link transgressive knowledge with proletarianization. I consider some cases in the following material.

Theory: The Benjamin Affect

In his essay, "The Work of Theory in the Age of Digital Transformation," Henry Jenkins argued that "the temporal flux characteristic of contemporary digital theory" is breaking down pre-existing distinctions in theory, including the break down of boundaries between academics and practitioners which demand new ways of thinking about theory.[23] The shift in how theory operates in the digital context is magnified by the Internet because the sub-industrial convergence of media, film, digital enterprises and new Information Technologies, is more than the sum of those industries.

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21. Rossiter, Ned (2006) Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions. Rotterdam: RAI Publishers: 174.

22. Rossiter, Ned (2006) Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions. Rotterdam: RAI Publishers: 175.

23. Jenkins, Henry (1999) "The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Transformation," in (Eds) T. Miller and R. Stam, A Companion to Film Theory. New York: Blackwell.

The critical prompt offered by Henry Jenkins' essay title is derived from cultural critic and theorist, Walter Benjamin whose essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" is a classic. This essay was stimulated - at least in part - by the surge in Hollywood movies and the rise of the cultural industries in the1920s and 1930s, that reconfigured the prospects for what Benjamin called "the politics of art."[24] Benjamin believed that the relationship between his era's new media and art could be articulated to the proletariat to become a revolutionary force for change. This double articulation of these three domains (new media - art - proletariat) offered unforeseen prospects to remake a single, united phenomenon. For Benjamin, art was a representation of material conditions, and when it was popularized by new technology, it offered a weapon with which to lay a claim to the otherwise suppressed everyday life. He noted for example, that "The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being embedded in the fabric of tradition."[25] The validation of art's tradition by new media was the realization of a utopian role for art within democracy. Benjamin saw art manifesting the realization of everyday life, while new media became the means to traditional bourgeois aesthetics. New media, suggested Benjamin, could politicize art by validating previously unacceptable popular art according to the acceptable standards of bourgeois taste. What was radical about Benjamin's enthusiasm for technology as a politicizing instrument was that he valued its capacity to allow the proletariat to speak about themselves. They were not expected to become like him – upper class bourgeois – but to realize their dignity in a society that cared about who they were and shared in the life of that society.

The traditions of art that Benjamin sweepingly invoked included pushing back against the institutional, conceptual and epistemological barriers of bourgeois art, then using those very same knowledge barriers dialectically for empowerment. Ultimately this theory of knowledge utilizes new media to give bourgeois value to the undervalued. It is a classic dialectical, even counterintuitive move.

To fully appreciate Benjamin's approach it is necessary to remember that the dominant concept of art has been constructed around Enlightenment ideas that in more recent years provoked a struggle over just what counts as art. The best known location for this struggle was the provocation by John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, first published in 1972. For its part, Neil Postman's claim in *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Showbusiness* that television is "junk," opened the pathway to exploring the model of US democracy that Poster argued is described by popular media culture.[26]

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24. Benjamin, Walter (1968) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections. New York: Schocken Books: 218.

25. Benjamin, Walter (1968) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections. New York: Schocken Books: 233.

26. Postman, Neil (1985) Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. New York: Penguin Books: 13, 115.

Robert Hughes added his voice with his withering attacks on popular art's commodification beginning in the 1990s. The debates about art were about a state of flux facing the keepers of respectability. High art and its culture, they insisted, did not include the proletariat with its creative manifestations of culture. Conversely, artistic practice and culture since the advent of media in general – printing press, phonogram, cinema, radio and television – has enlivened expressions of art and culture, producing in turn, an almost endless stream of anxiety by the powers-that-be. Indeed, the very history of cultural studies stretching back to the immediate post-World War 2 period in the UK matched the rise of public media and affluence, and is a testament to Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams's quest to give academic credence to the study of popular and working class culture against the entrenched high cultural predilections of the establishment.

My argument is that the Internet has provoked two phenomena: liberated suppressed proletarian culture, while promoting its emergence and rise. These two scenarios came about because digital production alters the politics of art as it passes through the transformative process of the new communication network. Consequently, theories that grapple with previously hidden and new types of culture need to offer a fresh perspective of their global circulation due to the Internet, where they become public due to the Internet. As Michael Warner argued in *Publics and Counterpublics*, we need to understand how publics are formed and how they think about themselves in the context of global circulation. (I will return to the concept of "public" later).

Given the claim that the Internet breaks with previously existing forms of rationality to reveal transgressive knowledge, the new configuration of culture is significant. In circumventing the constraints of bourgeois management and the previously existing epistemological landscape, the Internet has multiplied human potential. As Patricia Seed noted in a forum on Transnational History in the *American Historical Review*: "the cyber infrastructure ... now occupies a parallel space alongside more traditional forms of communication and transportation" so that the disciplinary and regulatory controls used for maintaining the order determined by such fields as professional training no longer apply.[27] New technologies as a threat to the establishment was a delight to Walter Benjamin who threw light on the way art had been historically mediated by traditional sensibilities. For him new media challenged every structure of relationships. That is to say, the value of art had been determined by class interests until the barriers were broken by the invention of photography and the emergence of the cultural industries: the music and film industries especially. Technology – mechanical reproduction – took the bourgeois sensibilities of the elite and mobilized them around suppressed cultures, so that what had been degraded as trivial and of no significant value received recognition. To reiterate the insight from

27.Seed, Patricia (2006)" AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," The American Historical Review, Vol 111(5): 1445.

Benjamin, recognition of popular art and culture produced a politics that acknowledged the history of already existing forms of bourgeois artistic analysis and then dialectically brought that proletarian culture within the domain of elite standards.

Benjamin's model magnifies the dialectic when applied to the Internet. The Internet offers the advanced digital infrastructure and its capability to anyone who can get near it. The questions is: if the proletariat can use the Internet, is it freed from the moral and social constraints of the past that were imposed by conventional media and its regulation of the public space? In the Internet space it is possible to evade the regulatory processes of rational bourgeois management that suppress unwanted images and political ideas to operate in an unregulated social milieu: it would be like imagining oneself within a Pieter Bruegel painting of the medieval marketplace, or Picasso's painting Guernica (notions I return to in the chapter on pornography). Today, the tools of communication embedded in the infrastructure and developed by the scientific elite for their enrichment are utilized for proletarianization. At one level elite values follow the rationality of embeddedness (and the circular thinking that is typical of such logicality) to reproduce the prevailing regime and its interests.[28] There is a prevailing sense that the values that produce the Internet are what appear on it. Here is an example from critic David Sholle drawing on *Critical Theory of Technology* (1991) and *Questioning Technology* (1999) books by Andrew Feenberg.

> The particular constructions of knowledge in institutions of science and engineering, the economic interests of companies, the cultural patterns of consumption, the spatial arrangements of communities and nations, the political motifs of government policies are inscribed into the technology from the very beginning.[29]

If we take Benjamin's model seriously, the way the Internet reconfigures social constructions is a powerful idea. It means that while the industrial interests of capital define the Internet, the circulation of content is at a modality that operates beyond the everyday transactions of business and media functions, even while being imbricated with it. Castells argued that "technology plays an essential role in framing the relationships of experience."[30]Against this claim is the fact that even with such technological framing the Internet incorporates the unintended consequences of other imaginations. Given this situation, the prescience of Benjamin's invocation to the politics of art and technology can be full appreciated, not because he predicted it, but because he wanted to see transgressive knowledge triumph.

28.Sholle, David (2002) "Disorganizing the "New Technology"," in (Ed) G. Elmer, Critical Perspectives on the Internet. Lanham: Roman and Littlefield: (3-27) 24.

29.Sholle, David (2002) "Disorganizing the "New Technology"," in (Ed) G. Elmer, Critical Perspectives on the Internet. Lanham: Roman and Littlefield: (3-27) 7.

30.Castells,Manual (2000) "Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society," British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 51 (1): (5-24) 9

Practice: Moral Economy

Walter Benjamin was not the only analyst examining proletarianization. Another somewhat later figure in the narrative is the English historian E.P. Thompson who deployed a critical approach to class theory in his post-structuralist work. Somewhat curiously, Thompson was not enamored of theory, especially the Euro-structuralist type used by Louis Althusser, which Thompson attacked in his 1971 essay "The Poverty of Theory." Thompson made a powerful case for the theory of agency by the poor and otherwise powerless in his 1960's classic, *The making of the English working class*.[31] He raised questions about comprehending the everyday life of working people during the industrial revolution. Thompson's methodological questions highlighted the rise of historiography as a contested space around which historians have circled their wagons ever since, while tacitly acknowledging the impending shifts in disciplinary boundaries due to the interactions of history with sociology and other disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography. He was committed to finding evidence about the material lives of working class people rather than structuralist theory and in so doing made a contribution to historical and cultural studies as heterodox, multidisciplinary and grounded in everyday life.

Thompson's debates with structuralism are historical footnotes, having given way these days to the disciplinary intermixing of theory with material research. However, the concept of "moral economy" he proposed in the 1971 essay "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" provides some of the intellectual fuel for this research on the Internet because it offers a way of conceiving a materialist explanation for how and why proletarians behave. The structuralist and poststructuralist split are part of the intellectual furniture of the academy now, while moral economy is thoroughly contemporary, as suggested in 2006 when Swedish researcher Stephen Svallfors released *The Moral Economy of Class: Attitudes in Comparative Perspective*. Just one of many research efforts that utilizes moral economy as an organizing idea to explore the relationship between class and social attitudes, Svallfors argued that moral economy draws attention to the way class interests operate "within a social and political constellation" of forces that can be differentiated between nations and over time.[32] The struggle for social justice movements has also been applied within a moral economy model by Andrew Calabrese.[33]

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31. E.P. Thompson (1966) The Making of the English Working Class. New York: Vintage Books.

32. Dugger, Edward (2007) Review, Journal of Economic Issues. Vol. 41 (1): 308-309.

33. Calabrese, Andrew (2005) "Communication, global justice and the moral economy," Global Media and Communication. Vol. 1 (3): 301-315.

Just what is "moral economy?" The first answer is that it is not moralistic political economy. "Moralistic economy" was protested by Thompson because it reflected the misappropriation of the principles of moral economy as a functional research tool.[34] This is not to say that moral economy should be bereft of the emotion that mobilizes human action. For example, Clay argued in "Rethinking Moral Economy," that it offers a way to think through economic and non-economic features of social and political behavior built around issues of "moral indignation."[35] The point is that moral economy can be appropriated to explain the sensations that are experienced in the contemporary context of the current complexity.

E.P. Thompson was open to the possibility that moral economy is a theory basket the researcher dips into to provide meaning to the multiple layers of agency within the everyday lives of working people. Thus a second answer presents itself to the question what is moral economy? It is a theory of agency applied to "the poor" and "the crowd."[36] In using the term this way, Thompson celebrated proletarian life. There is a historical reason for this: when England was undergoing its transformation towards capitalist markets there were profound disruptions to established social and economic life. The move from feudalism and dependency on the good graces of the Lord of the Manor produced catastrophic changes to culture and society. The new industrial economy was portrayed in *The making of the English working class* where Thompson argued that "the rhetoric of the free market" incorporated "the language of 'the new moral order'," that was opposed by laborers in the famous bread riots.[37]

By 1971, Thompson's definition of moral economy had expanded to explain "how their (people's) behavior is modified by custom, culture and reason." This triumvirate of behavioral causes is a trope for agency: what, asks Thompson, can we understand of the "complex, culturally mediated function" of the poor's behavior?[38] Rather than moving into more abstract theoretical questions, Thompson draws a model of how otherwise stable crowds change as their behavior moves to riotous outrage at the price increases and food shortages. Their behavioral change fits with their pre-existing custom, their culture and reason in the face of disruption to their way of life. Fundamentally, suggests Thompson, "the moral economy of the poor" was "a popular consensus as to what were illegitimate practices,

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34. Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 - 136.

35. Clay, Thomas (2001) "Rethinking Moral Economy," American Political Science Review. 95: 85-95.

36. Thompson, E.P. (1971) Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 - 136 (136).

37. Thompson, E.P. (1966) The Making of the English Working Class. New York: Vintage Books: 206.

38. Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 – 136 (78).

grounded upon a consistent *traditional* view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community."[39] "The belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs" in a consensual expression of community interests gained credence because it was "endorsed" and given license "by the authorities."[40] Laborers who had lived with known rights and obligations within their world of "moral assumptions" had to transition to live within a set of regulations that were constructed around the new political economy of industrial labor. (It was the rise of the "wage-nexus" that brought about riots by crowds of the poor, argued Thompson.) The "economistic picture" painted by new social relations destroyed the "old moral economy of provision" and "diminished human reciprocity."[41] Thompson's agency theory used moral economy to explain principles of cultural legitimacy within industrialization where the newly laboring poor claimed their pre-existing way of life, even as change was destroying their custom, culture and reason.

Raising "reason" to the level of specific value is not without its flaws. The point to Thompson's claim should not however be lost – the rationality that he accords to those people operating under the new moral economy of industrialization, is suggestive precisely because it is a rationality that is delimited not by Enlightenment notions, but through the experience of customs and culture. The transformation of rural feudalism that gave way to a cash economy in the cities produced its own reason, albeit something approximating uninformed dependency on capital and the industrial and rising middle classes. It was a form of reason that cannot be discounted because the food riots were evidence enough that the newly disenfranchised laborers knew their hunger and why it existed. To recognize the motivation for rioting over hunger as a statement of knowledge is to connect custom with culture and with reason and thus recognize the material linkages between them.

The rise of towns and cities that accompanied the industrial revolution has been widely documented and debated by historians and will not be revisited here. However, the rural civil society that operated before the laboring classes were drawn to the cities was a model of synchronicity. In this view, the "lingering obligations of mutuality" as Thompson called it in *The making of the English working class* operated as an ideal type of co-dependency.[42]Thompson explored the moment through the lens of moral economy,

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39. Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 – 136 (71).

40. Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 – 136 (78).

41. Thompson, E.P (1971) "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present. No. 50: 76 – 136 (136).

42. Thompson, E.P. (1966) The Making of the English Working Class. New York: Vintage Books: 203.

to show that when that relationship broke down, agitation, disputes and crowd riots followed.

In the early years of what became "the cultural turn," Thompson's moral economy approach pushed back against the perceived deterministic theory of Althussarian structuralism, as well as cultural simplification – he footnotes Raymond Williams in *The making of the English working class.* As Colin Barker noted, "A moral economy emerges within and against a capitalist economy," where it is "constantly regenerating itself as anti-capitalist critique as a resistance movement."[43] It is for reasons like these that moral economy operates as a tool with which to view the Internet and its complex ideological shifts and turns. Ideology navigates as it were, across the global perspectives of agency, class, values and rationality, to offer insights into the construction of proletarian ideological formations: proletarianization.

From a communications theory perspective, Thompson's use of English pre-industrial moral economy shares the optimism that characterized Jergen Habermas's controversial notions of pre-industrial communication as an "ideal" public sphere. Indeed, amongst historians of English public life, not to mention a generation of critical communication scholars, Habermas's notion of the public sphere has been used and debated, suggesting the richness of his concept of the ideal public sphere.[44] Reviewing Habermas's corpus Nicholas Garnham suggested that Habermas's early work (despite being "vague and flawed") "offered the possibility of a concrete historically situated sociological analysis...of the relation between the material, economic reality of media systems, and the public debate, formation of public opinion and influence on public policy, those media made possible."[45] Media in all its forms - from the printed tracts of the sixteenth century to today's Internet - operates within a context that is defined by a dual reading of change: the change they reflect and the change they promote. This is a moral economy constructed around people who have a voice, whether in the cities and towns of the emerging capitalist enterprise or in the globalized context of the Internet. Accepting the challenge of this changing moral economy is part of the critical project of understanding how ideal public spheres are constituted.

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43. Barker, Colin (2006) "Ideology, Discourse, and Moral Economy: Consulting the People of North Manchester, Atlantic Journal of Communication. Vol. 14 (1): 7-27 (15).

44. Withington, Phil (2007) "Public Discourse: Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England," The American Historical Review. Vol. 112 (4): 1016-1038 (1021).

45. Garnham, Nicholas (2007) "Habermas and the public sphere," Global Media and Communication. Vol. 3 (2): 201-214 (206).

If moral economy can be accepted as central in generating "the most crucial questions of method and interpretation," it can throw light on the Internet and the formation of proletarianization.[46] Applying moral economy to the Internet, offers a richer, more complex understanding of proletarianization within the constellations in which it operates by offering ideal spaces. This means that the ideologies the Internet exposes express the moral economy of the new complexity. The challenge is when those ideologies are transgressive and may be based on reason that is not founded in Enlightenment values. In the Internet era, there is a change in the relationship between the global poor and the global rich. All Internet users live and work in a potentially ideal public sphere, but the global moral economy impinges on our conceits, our comforts and our imaginations, exposing the transgressive knowledge that was previously hidden, subsumed and suppressed by Enlightenment standards of publicness, civility and decency. The Internet brings this moral economy into the global public sphere, forcing us to ask new questions about values in an ideologically rich time.

46. Booth, J. (1994) "On the Idea of the Moral Economy." American Political Science Review, Vol. 88 (3): 653-667 (653).

Chapter 3
The (Up)Rising

Proletarianization

Raymond Williams, one of the grand-parents of cultural studies, offered a roadmap to the study of culture, which is applicable to the culture of the Internet as much because the Internet is intrinsically connected to the history of media and culture, as because the Internet is a technology that offers bright possibilities for new cultural formations, of which Williams was fond. Williams argued that the empirical cultural researcher who studied the "phases of social consciousness which correspond to real social situations and relations," should avoid "social neutralizing."[1] By this he meant that a shift to the neutral territory of "bourgeois cultural sociology" would use convenient yet shorthand ideas that have taken hold in communication studies, like "effects," "mass public," "control" and "socialization," to replace the study of "complex sociology ... within ... the capitalist system."[2] While much has happened since Williams launched that critique in his "Sociology of Culture" essay in 1977, the absence of a determined and critical engagement with and study of the relationship between class and the Internet – indeed, between media and class in general – suggests that bourgeois

1. Williams, Raymond (1977) "The Sociology of Culture" In Marxism and Literature, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 136-141, 136.

2. Williams, Raymond (1977) "The Sociology of Culture,"136-137.

cultural studies is in fact ascendant. Suffice to say, the relationship between the Internet and people who never had access to advanced communications technologies, marks a transformation of the global media space.However, much of the Internet's content is not welcome in "good homes," which is to say the dominant spaces where "bourgeois cultural sociology" is lived.

The challenge then is finding a way to deal with the Internet which has become part of the everyday world people inhabit. How is social neutralizing constituted in the era of the Internet? Does the Internet encourage a form of alienation from the complex affairs of the world, or does it magnify them? These questions acknowledge the flow of what could be termed social negativism - the unintended consequences - that bourgeois life encounters in digital form. The Internet's global reach connects us to this negative space more than ever. These negative forces flourish within the spaces of the Internet as malevolent, accusing, pleading, loving, hating, starving and destroying energies. Even if it was possible, the idea of allocating a neutralized space to the energy that combines billions of people is no longer possible, as the Internet locks users into the network making other options less likely, even while offering so much.[3] The Internet creates a proximity that means a communicative and cultural interaction that is unavoidable. Neutral is not a place, neither is it a space that a choice can be made to escape from or into. The terrain has changed and if we do not understand it and act to rectify its grotesqueries, we may be destined to a new form of global misery, even while we may believe we enjoy the trappings of bourgeois existence. Proletarianization draws attention to this change in the state of things.

Uprising – political economy redux

The Internet's contribution to the forces "rising up from below" offer an opportunity to analyze the emerging continent of new communications linked with social movements. By working across, against and with what Europeans refer to as Information Society Theory – which is capitalized in an effort to demonstrate its centrality to Enlightenment certainty and security in uncertain times – the Internet has produced volcanoes of unintended consequences in pornography and jihadism which can be appreciated for what they are: the expression of new social forms and unanticipated cultural attitudes manifest as outpourings of human activity. The implications of arguing this way is that Information Society Theory cannot be thrown aside like some sort of sclerotic idea from the 1970s or perhaps from the 1940s. In that historical moment, Norbert Wiener theorized in *Cybernetics: or, Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine,* a bright new firmament of controlled communicative connectedness through cybernetics, where mechanical systems and feedback would provide rationally constructed, mathematical clarity for society. These days, Information Society

3. Lanier, Jaron (2010) You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto, New York: Knopf.

Theory is a space in which ideas have power in unimagined ways to create the monstrosity of hyper-rationality in tandem with the irrational. Mathematics like science can only get us so far along the road to "common sense," and as I suggested in the previous chapter, mathematical and engineering rationality has hardly generated a rational nirvana. Speculation about the Internet is best navigated by recalling Nicholas Garnham's observation that Information Society Theory has been placed by history "at the center of the concerns of scholars of communication" and as such is the "dominant ideology of the current historical period."[4] Information Society Theory, argued Garnham, "raises questions which are unavoidable for anyone who wishes to understand the relationship between the structures and processes more generally; in short if we wish to understand and intelligently act upon the world in which we actually live."[5]

While I agree that the questions are unavoidable, more contemporary evidence suggests a contrast, where the challenge is no longer about how a theoretical perspective allows Garnham's mythical "anyone who wishes to understand," to fiddle with theory. Rather, Information Society Theory must recognize the forces rising up from below are based on material issues that play out to disturb rational equilibrium as we have considered it. Anyone who wishes to "understand" as Garnham suggested may find that such an approach, when combined with "intelligence" have been relegated to the rational dustbin of history by those who utilize the Internet.

It has to be said that the uprising has been confused with the "irrational exuberance" of the Internet bubble in a subtle shift in a kind of economistic determinism. Of course, when everything is seen through the dark glasses of profit, everything is smudged by the creeping shadow of self-interest. Information Society Theory becomes little more than a stopping point on the way to American exceptionalism. Here, nobody can wait for the Internet to reveal itself because in a perverse sort of pax-Americana, the exceptional business logic of progress and freedom is the default for the chaos that brings change and progress. Depending on one's perspective, the settings of progress-chaos-war-peace-happiness-despair will slip and slide into a meaningful whole sooner or later.

The exceptional American perspective avoids social and political implications in preference to the economic ones. Thus the New Era thinking of Doug Henwood offers a short range view of the bubble without the perspicacity one would like. The view here, is that the Internet produced no "revolution" and that the "intuitive plausibility of Internet lore" as a tool remaking human social and economic relations could not be sustained.[6] The Internet bubble perspective is a problem because it is clear that the In-

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4. Garnham, Nicholas (1998) "Information Society Theory as Ideology: A Critique," Loisirs et Societe, Vol. 21 (1) :97-120: 118.

5. Garnham, Nicholas (1998) "Information Society Theory as Ideology: A Critique," Loisirs et Societe, Vol. 21 (1) :97-120: 118.

6. Henwood, Doug (2003) After the New Economy. New York: The New Press: 26-27.

ternet is vast and an increasingly persuasive means of communication that functions outside of lore as well as law. It has material consequences that follow the irrationality of the market. Indeed, the networked economy is huge and expanding, and while the impact on profitability has been immense, creating not the sucking sound of free trade (as suggested by Presidential candidate Ross Perot in 1992) but the magnetic pull of new economic activity, for a privileged few. Take for example Cisco, one of the driver firms providing much of the Internet infrastructure's built hardware: it saw the annual sales value of each of its employees shift from $480,000 in 2001 to $680,000 in mid-2005.[7] That is, in 2005 each employee was generating $680,000. From the American-economic perspective, this kind of benchmarking statistic provides an implicit and unchallengeable proof that the Internet is a vast economically powerful engine for those employees of the great wealth making national economic machine. Perhaps it is greater than anyone anticipated and as such carries the embedded force of unstoppable American economic power, dragging with it the social and cultural forces that "follow the money."

Cisco's example may not add up to much in the conventional discourse of contemporary "get what you can" competitive capitalism. Yet when one company has such influence building the Internet infrastructure and carrying CEO John Chamber's "gospel" around the globe the example reinforces the need for a wide-ranging Information Society Theory that will not stagger under the weight of powerful interests, determined as they are to win at all costs in a somewhat pointless pure play of profit for profit's sake. On the other hand, Information Society Theory critically explains the Internet by straining out the constituents of business-as-usual interests while acknowledging the deep cultural changes that a limited economistic perspective cannot effectively recognize.

Stranger Danger?

It is not for nothing then that I note Michelle Foucault's comment:

> Everything is dangerous.

Foucault actually started his comments in an interview by noting that everything is more than bad and in being dangerous, the motivation emerges – in his view at least – for "hyper-and pessimistic activism."[8] Bertolt Brecht made a similar point in his late 1930s poem "On Judging" with a conclusion that Foucault could not quite muster:

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7. Markoff, John and Richtell, Matt (2005) "Profits, not Jobs, on the Rebound in Silicon Valley." The New York Times, Business, July 3.

8. Foucault, Michelle (2004) "On the Genealogy of Ethics." In Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, Michelle Foucault, Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: The New Press: 253-280 (256).

> Only an idiot lives without worry. The unsuspecting are destined to go under...[9]

Living in dangerous times is a human hazard. And despite our best protestations, every era has its crises with the forces that give rise to historical moments of note. The current historical moment's scope and scale is that the new and emerging forces associated with the Internet offer a crisis which is defined by a series of contradictory and conflicting realities. Somewhat alarmingly, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri described "all that catastrophic phenomena" of crisis in the current era as "immeasurable quantities, imperfections, distortions of information, cruel and barbaric forms of exploitation, in addition to social and political revolutions"[10] Admittedly, my language cannot improve on this evocative list. The tone of the current crisis is defined by the approximation of this language to the content circulating on the Internet. The ideas emerging from across the planet are unprecedented in their reach, their influence and their impact on everyday life. These ideas play out through the Internet in ways that suggest that social life that was once oppressed, voiceless, unknown to the Enlightened and therefore both absent and hidden becomes known. While Hardt and Negri suggest amongst other things catastrophe, I want to suggest that unprecedented forms of power are incorporated into the Internet.

That power is not linear. As suggested above, and as I will discuss later, the Internet domain (not domain names .org, .dom., .xxx, .net) is a powerfully interlinked digital machinery that operates as digital stuff delivered to the individual at the desk top or cell phone and in so doing is remaking the sense of sentience. In rapid succession, the Internet has grown from email based text-only messages to user interfaces with images built on digital pixels to music and movies. The "datasphere" that facilitates the creation, packaging, distribution and collection (passing through Echelon, the global eavesdropping system run by the US Government's National Security Agency and its counterparts in Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand) is a mix of pop-for-cash cat and mouse creativity and totalitarian surveillance. As such, the digital data flows and spills in a remorseless Rorsarch pattern of potential and horror.

The challenge of the Internet is that the content is familiar and unfamiliar, unconstrained by existing media limits and regulations and seriously unsettling in its detail, its intent and its transformative power:"catastrophic phenomena" indeed.

9.Brecht, Bertolt (1976) Bertolt Brecht Poems 1913-1956. London: Eyre Methuen: 308.

10.Negri, Antonio, Hardt, Michael (2004) Multitude. New York: The Penguin Press: 154.

The Internet proletariat

A good Marxist would suggest a set of logical progressions resulting from catastrophe, from which a number of theoretical propositions and conclusions should be drawn. The argument would follow that it is good to see the proletariat making a move, because the major progressive shifts in human history are generally about proletarian revolt heralding change. Most revolution puts the idea of the proletariat somewhere in the foreground. However, whichever way you look at it, proletarian interests have not been invoked by techno-boosters since the rise of the Internet. And why should they be? Working class culture is generally denigrated as irrelevant to the construction of society, while pretty well everyone has celebrated a commitment to upward (social and economic) mobility inextricably connected with "progress." An appreciation of "badness" can help clarify this situation, because the interests of progress have infected the ability of thinkers and critics alike to remove themselves from their own material ambitions associated with a Judeo-Christian work ethic of individual, even collective improvement. In contrast, "badness" is avoided, and proletarian social life is portrayed as bad because it is "down there." This is an especially powerful construct of the dominant view of the world. Working class culture is devalued as bad, while the Internet pushes progress with messianic determinism into spaces that do not align with established understandings of good or bad.

An argument from Michael Denning, with its binary notions, offers a starting point: "the logic of capitalism has always generated the counter-logic of proletarian struggle, a battle over the conditions of life."[11] You are either for us or against us, according to this view. This type of class-centric logic does not sit well in the Internet era, where the comforts of a counter logic are is in short supply. That is, the predictability of the "logic" of reason is in short supply. Furthermore, the path of binary relations may work for digital engineering, but its utility is limited in the context of the Internet itself. That is to say, the studied logic of the past is a misfit and an anomaly when applied to the Internet. The belief that there is a logic of capitalism and a counter-logic of proletarianization is an unsuitable binary that cannot adequately explain the way informationization offers unfettered access to human experience. The Internet is about a proletariat that has been formed from the counter-intuition of the dominant historical DNA of existing possibilities. By dumping logic and being "bad" this particular Internet proletariat is constructed with tools that are not comfortably within reach, or stored in a political or sociological lexicon, or in legal footnotes. Nor are they some pleasantly anticipated "free" flowing concept proferred

11. Denning, Michael (2005) "Lineaments and Contradictions on the Neoliberal University System," Working Group on Globalization and Culture, Yale University. Working Paper, World Social Forum: 10.

by the likes of John Perry Barlow and the libertarian luminaries of the Electronic Frontier Foundation with their belief in human ambition that mobilizes US-centric ingenuity. This Internet proletariat is bad and it is in formation: it carries a Kalishnikov, a dildo, crack cocaine and dies and kills at will. It is available 24 hours a day seven days a week. The argument here is ultimately that the Internet will remain *in formation* as long as *information* slips mercurially into spaces where it festers and poisons civil society with knowledge that is incomprehensible to the logic of binaries.

Defining proletarians

Ask any university undergraduate to hum or better still sing the *Internationale* and there is pretty much silence. Play the song from a respectable Hollywood vehicle, such as the soundtrack to the Warren Beatty vehicle *Reds* and the blank faces continue. Ask a billion Chinese and they will sing along in unison – with or without irony. There are profound differences in how the people of the world relate to their place in the history of work and as members of a class. And while it is not my place to propose a theory of political ignorance, it is important to recognize the gaps in the everyday knowledge of large numbers of people in the developed world. This gap is constructed by the way technology offers a way out of class identity and into a range of possibilities in a seamless sweep of technological mirrors. Information Technology is a feature of this mixture of class and identity architecture, even while class itself remains a slippery concept, as I will show in the next chapter.

The failure to document the proletariat can be observed in curios places: Proletariat (or any of its derivations) is not mentioned in Raymond Williams cultural studies reference book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. So while Williams championed the emergence of upwardly mobile working class chaps like himself, he omitted reference to the vast majority of people on the planet, whose lives are determined by an active relationship with capital. The definition is partly to blame. The reference to "an active relationship with capital" is intentionally loaded with a controversialist sensibility. That is, the proletariat is always defined by their relation to capital: but nowadays what defines them is the absence of tangible capital so they could move beyond subsistence. The prospect of the tangible shift through "upward mobility" is unrealized. Traditionally, the proletariat's relationship with capital is defined by the fact that they engage in the market place through transactions and as Denning noted above are engaged in a counterlogic that is clear from the moral economy of their everyday lives. To accumulate capital and thereby to consolidate that into property and thus concepts of lifestyle and status has changed with the advent of credit. Nevertheless, the transactions are a foundation for the wage labor that provides subsistence. What happens when subsistence relationships are reinforced through bad credit, debt, ongoing powerlessness and continuing poverty? When the promise of a better life is articulated with the Internet

to produce the same old experiences, what are the implications? Does the Internet bring a continuation of misery, the potential of relief, or merely digital stuff that combine in a new kind of alchemy? There are a number of trajectories in finding answers to those questions. I will draw on the US for much of the material, before expanding into other national settings.

In the US, class is constituted by a unique type of determinism that carries the national imagination towards the American Dream that emerges to permanently gestate into technological classlessness. Gregory Mantsios referred to America's "class avoidance phenomenon"[12] He argued that "class is not in the domain of public discourse" in the US, although he added that the middle class is frequently invoked as part of a ploy by politicians to incorporate "the everybody" of the American classless mythology into the politicians' claims to represent their constituency. Consequently, the language of class is frequently subsumed into non-controversial nomenclatures. By 2005, the class free zone of popular American discourse began to fracture. For example *The New York Times* implicitly noted this shift with its 11 day special issue on class in mid-May 2005:

> Today, the country has gone a long way toward an appearance of classlessness. Americans of all sorts are awash in luxuries that would have dazzled their grandparents. Social diversity has erased many of the old markers. It has become harder to read people's status in the clothes they wear, the cars they drive, the votes they cast, the god they worship, the color of their skin .[13]

Status or not, in the US there is a myth of classlessness which continues because material life in the high-credit-fast-lane has made it possible to camouflage one's class under the advances of low-cost, technologically advanced goods, such as clothing which "disguises" poverty, suggested by Mantsios and later confirmed by *The New York Times* reports on class in 2005.[14] A similar kind of social masking is offered in the US by the relatively low cost of automobiles, the subsidized low cost gasoline which, when combined with the low cost of credit and – or the ease with which large corporations will offer loans for automobiles – suggests considerable wealth.

Lifestyle technology that disguises poverty is a powerful equalizer.The impression of classless abundance and the symbolic value placed upon it tends to skew critical discussion of class because as Max Weber suggested, "lifestyle" offers social prestige and status, even when it offers no equivalent power. For its part, when technology is cheap and ubiquitous enough it expands the possibilities for difference. As an additional layer over the cost-

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12.Mantsios, Gregory (2000) "Class in America: Myths and Realities," In, Rereading America, (Eds) Colombo, G., Cullen, R., Lyle, B., Boston Bedford: 303.

13.Scott, Janny and Leonhardt, David (2005) "Shadowy Lines That Still Divide." The New YorkTimes,May 15.URL http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/15/national/class/OVERVIEW-FINAL.html?scp=1&sq=Today,%20the%20country%20has%20gone%20a%20long%20way%20toward%20an%20appearance%20of%20classlessness&st=cse

14.Mantsios, Gregory (2000) "Class in America: Myths and Realities," In, Rereading America, (Eds) Colombo, G., Cullen, R., Lyle, B., Boston Bedford: 303.

ubiquity nexus of advanced nations' utilization of lifestyle technology, the Internet creates its own mythology: the claim that democratic equality is achieved by mediated content on a computer monitor.

Whichever way you look at it, since World War 2 the American Dream has meant public aspirations have moved towards independent wealth and security, where the goal of "becoming" is imagined as belonging to the beautiful people who exist in a state of unconstrained freedom. It is a seductive idea illustrated by Edward Albee in his 1960 Play *The American Dream*. Here, the characters, "Young Man" and "Grandma" are discussing the otherwise anonymous van driver, who **is** *The American Dream*.

> GRAMDMA. ...And will you look at that face.
>
> YOUNG MAN. Yes, it's quite good isn't it? Clean cut and Midwest farm-boy type, almost insultingly good-looking in a typical American way. Good profile, straight nose, honest eyes, wonderful smile...
>
> GRAMDMA. Yup. Boy you know what you are don't you. You're the American Dream, that's what you are. All those other people, they don't know what they're taking about. You – you are the American Dream.[15]

This loaded dialogue shows how class in the US can be denied by the appeal to another reality and thereby the absence of material considerations. It is as if an ineffable force will carry all before it in a magical invocation of empowerment through visual appeal. Albee's classlessness mirrors the new world's dream. As he sees it, class is avoided because the fluidity of the society is enhanced by a refusal to acknowledge the dividing walls of class. In this situation, "beauty" becomes the foundation for success, as one's looks determine opportunity and mobility. In this myth-claiming scenario, the discourse sweeps away the vestige of the past giving way to a new way of being. The ecology of the pleasure in desire being spoken of in *The American Dream* allows looks to determine success. The desired being is not a product of its own history. It is as if it exists outside of where it started and lives only in an imagined dream. The imaginary is onward and upward, away from any of the messy talk about the past. It is towards betterment, towards aspirations that are free of the constraints of anything but appearance.

History is much more than appearance. Unsurprisingly, the past that interests critics least, yet irritates us the most is that of the worker. The part of "the worker" that warrants attention is its negative connotations of irrational and material interests swept along by irrational exuberance or decadence. But the characteristics of the proletariat show that as it has evolved in line with capitalism it has generally been excluded from the interests of the writers of cultural history and the dominant discourse generally. It is as if the wave of post-World War II affluence and the upward mobility that accompanied it evacuated the consciousness of the documentarians, even while their very own history was just a step away from subsistence. The future was where the money was and that was never with the proletariat. The social status that did not come from good looks came from doing and those

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15.Albee, Edward (1961) The American Dream: New York: Signet

that "do" were engaged in "activity values:" in the US it is doing that is highly esteemed.[16] The doers are professionals such as sports stars, physicians and lawyers. It was as if there was an aspirational guidepost that pointed up and away from history. "The struggle" in political campaigns became the effort to organize and remove oneself from hardship. Yet in contrast, a case could be made (but will not be here) that the historical formation of the Labor Parties (and the social democrats and communist parties in Europe and Australia) moved to another place, where they did not celebrate constant upward mobility, but access to the commonwealth. In extreme cases political parties controlled access to a commonwealth through versions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to create "the worker's paradise," or at least a social system that preached and tried to practice social justice and equity.

Would it be too much to suggest that the professional ambitions of academics writing about the proletariat have led to a situation where careerist and personal self interest reproduces the dominant (non-proletarian) ideology? Why study and write about the proletariat – the working class and the dirt associated with that kind of labor – when the aspiring writer's commitment is to the upper middle class? I distinguish upper middle from middle because upper middle is a shorthand way of referring to academics and their ilk whose privilege is doubly blinding. The first type of blindness is the almost conspiratorial silence on the focus on upward mobility provided by employment within the US academy, which is one of the great democratic achievements of progressives. The second type of blindness is a function of the first, namely the tendency to turn away from the increasingly harsh realities facing the middle class for whom the winds of change offer little but uncertainty, fear and poverty. The implications are that the discourse about class that gains most prominence is actually **among** the middle classes who discuss the maintenance of their own claims to wealth. They see the light on the hill of progressive politics interpolated in "the pursuit of happiness" and liken it to the fulsome dedication shown by Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*: all else is left behind, as the flotsam and jetsam of our past recedes with personal and professional progress. As I will explain in the next chapter, Thorstein Veblen saw this trend at the turn of the century and shook with anger and fear at what "the leisure class" would do to US aspirations for liberalism, opportunity and equality.

If any one certainty applies to this discussion it is the layering of the constituents of proletarian existence. Dutch social researcher Jan Lucassen suggested that the most convenient way to establish the meaning of proletarianship is by adopting a structural continuum of labor as either "free" or "unfree".[17] Lucassen's idea is derived from Charles Tilley's definition

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16. Stewart, Edward and Bennett, Milton (1991) American Cultural Patterns: A Cross Cultural Perspective. Boston:Intercultural Press: 61-62.

17. Lucassen, Jan (2005) Proletarianization in Western Europe and India: concepts and methods. Global Economic History Network, Utrecht.

that the proletarian has "little or no control" over their destiny. If this continuum of labor is accepted as a model for measuring attachment to one's proletarian antecedents, it raises questions as to who is actually in control of their labor within the production process. As cultural studies theorist John Frow suggested, class structures and their definition are fraught to such an extent that "Rather than asking 'what classes are there?', or "Who is in this class?' we should perhaps be concerned with class as a theoretical construct with discursive effects."[18] This means that making sense of the proletarian involves a dynamic orientation where the layers of meaning move and drift in line with discursive theory. Frow's suggestion that there is a way of constructing a theory of class is therefore convenient, but it is also challenged by the hard reality that the territory has been redefined by new communications technologies.

There is an intentional element of definitional uncertainty about these comments. More precise definitions would do little to address the discursive challenge of proletarianization. Indeed, any precision would move the study to a distracting level of concreteness. In a study such as this, my concern is to paint a picture of the changing circumstances in which we all live because of the Internet.

The Internet has extended work into globalized locales – Bangalore, Melbourne, Dublin, New York – so that production in new social spaces expands the number of people tied to capital. This new spatial orientation meets at least one definition of globalization, where the characteristics of the expanding linkages create additional layers of meaning.Space itself is defined by volatility. As Jody Berland noted in (an early draft) of *North of Empire*, "connections between space and culture are comprised not only of what is mobile, unstable or transformative, but also of what is constant, material, and enduring."[19] Many of the layers of meaning within the new spatial context of the global Internet demand more complex definitions of work than those advanced within western-centric-styles of capitalism to take account of the Internet.

Indeed, the downward pull of what could once have been concretely described as "the lower classes" is too fraught with discursive meaning to imagine any categories of collectivity being operational. Yet the proletariat continues to exist in a double bind: firstly, the silence that comes from the subservient subsistence that has destroyed any of its claims to legitimacy, dignity, property and the right to self representation, and secondly, its apparent absence of power. This situation cannot be left unexamined. The next section looks at how various meanings of proletarianization have emerged.

18.Frow, John (1995) Cultural Studies and Cultural Value. New York: Oxford University Press: 117.

19.Berland, Jody (2009) North of Empire: Essays on the Cultural Technologies of Space. Durham: Duke University Press: front matter.

Proleterianization: Walter Benjamin – Take 2

"Proletarianization" appears in Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" which is well read by students and critics as a foundational modernist tract on the transforming contradictions of technology in the 1920s and 1930s. Benjamin's historical location as a product of the Weimar Republic's explosion of creativity, was followed by Frankfurt School theoretical ingenuity within the bosom of Modernism. This era of technical innovation saw the rise of mass produced art such as cinema and sound recordings and the move to Hollywood's style of cultural industrial production. The advent of fascism, anti-Semitism and Nazism in Benjamin's homeland of Germany ushered in the period defined by Theodore Adorno as "horror".[20] In the Nazi context, Benjamin conceived of proletarianization as the worst manifestation of workerist exploitation within the horror.

Given the location of technology as the medium through which to imagine representations of the newly constructed politics in the Nazi era, much of Benjamin's work did indeed reflect the impending horror of democratic communicative forms being reconstituted for evil. In this context, Benjamin saw proletarianization as a social and political construction where fascism created the illusion of public participation through aesthetics and mass events. For Benjamin, the masses were allowed to express themselves within the vision of the state's imagination, while not being given any "rights" to property relations. As the masses moved to the ecstatic sway and sweep of Hitler's gigantic artistic stadium events, the culmination of these ritual events was war, which in itself could be seen as a perverse modernist play on aesthetic claims to human ambition. In an unnerving mirror of our own epoch – with wars in the Middle East especially - Benjamin suggests: "Only war makes it possible to mobilize all of today's technical resources while maintaining the property system."[21]

Seen from the perspective of post World War 2 communication history, Benjamin's essay gives salience to fascistic art's reconstitution of social life. Evidence of the aesthetically determined sense of proletarianization within the fascist political moment(s) appears in Leni Reifenstahl's documentary celebration of spectacle, *Triumph of the Will*. This record of the Sixth Congress of the National Socialist Party in 1934 has been seen as the quintessential testament to a fascist cinematic aesthetic. Certainly, the events surrounding the rise of Hitlerism were presented and read in the film community and beyond, as a testament to the novelty of Reifenstahl's contribution to art and propaganda. However, my purpose here is not to engage in a re-

20. Adorno, Theodor (2005) Minima moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life. (First published 1951). London: Verso: 108, 234.

21. Benjamin, Walter (1969) "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In Illuminations. New York: Schocken Books: 240

vision of a cinema-centric analysis, which has been taken up in detail over many years by film and aesthetics scholars, perhaps most notably *Fascinating Fascism*, by Susan Sontag in 1975. To pursue that discussion here would constrain the value of *Triumph of the Will* for the purpose of illustrating the fascist approaches to proletarianization to which Benjamin referred. Studying *Triumph of the Will* it is possible to elaborate on Benjamin's concept of proletarianization, by unearthing aspects of the fascist process in 1930 and 1940s Germany.

In a scene that records Hitler addressing the Reich Labor Service Review – they are carrying shovels on their shoulders like rifles, because Germany had not yet rearmed after the 1918 armistice – the proletarian ideology is explained. Hitler's speech encapsulates his idea of the proletarian process for Nazi Germany.

> You present a great idea and we know that for millions of our national comrades' physical labor will no longer be a divisive concept. But it will instead bind us together and furthermore, no longer will it be the case in Germany that physical labor will be seen as anything less than any other work... the time will come when no German can be admitted into the community of the people until he has first become a member of your group. And I know that just as you serve this Germany proudly all of Germany will see its sons marching with you with proud joy.

Physical labor is the glue that defines Germans. Importantly, it is given a nuanced non-Bolshevik meaning, because to the east of Germany the dictatorship of the proletariat was seeking to create a new dignity for workers where new property relations would result. This is a significant distinction. The historical perspective that contrasts collective proletarianization in Hitlerist Germany with collective proletarianization in a Marxist-Leninist Russia was a feature of modernist political organization. In fact, an undeclared and continuing ideological war against wealth redistribution continues as a form of anti-communism in the name of this convenient ambiguity. The steady demonization of communism has been identified as one of the core screens or biases in the US media, by Edward Herman. Considerable effort has gone into conflating Hitlerism with Soviet communism, often by critics who conveniently overlook the foundational distinction between workers who work to become national cannon fodder as in the Nazi model and those who worked to share the wealth within Soviet communal systems of self management. The real intention of these ongoing conflations is to water down the claims for any kind of ideological foundation for redistributive politics and to thereby denigrate the cultural life of proletarians.

Claims to create national unity out of physical work were a specialty of fascist thought and action, which deserves more analysis than it has received in the context of contemporary shifts towards a more-work-less-play obsession. The infamous death camp motto over the entrance gateway of Auschwitz "Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work makes one free") powerfully pushes the fascistic tone of physical labor as a tool of advancement and foundation of proletarian subservience. Yet to concentrate on this notion is to misdirect our gaze at how the economically powerless are reconstructed as valu-

able through the lowest form of physical labor. In places like post-Depression Germany where there was little hope of work, the appeal to create so-called dignity of "freedom" out of desperation, is where proletarianization became a powerful concept. History showed us that "freedom" was really "death," which is the most vicious form of hatred. As a way of negating the individual, the work itself is inverted in meaning to become uplifting: much like a pig in shit is considered happy. Belonging to the work group became the means to the Nazi end, not the means to a redistributive and participatory future.

Hitler's speeches in *Triumph of the Will* constructed "powerful metaphors and imagery" as an extension of the complex consciousness-creating process of proletarianization.[22] This took place within the broad scope of Joseph Goebbel's propaganda system, where the experience of German life was incorporated into a singular image of the Reich as an unstoppable historically determined event – according to the propagandist preoccupations of Hitlerism. In summary, as laid out here, two types of meaning emerge from the fascist notion of work in Nazi Germany. The first is the propertyless process of collective identity for a shared national purpose, namely unity in warfare and death; and secondly, total negation through concentration camp labor.

Proletarianization in the public sphere

Benjamin's proposal that Nazism proffered proletarianization as a solution for national development was bound by the readings of class that he saw from his vantage point. His perspective informs the key question: who is becoming proletarian? The answer is in line with the discursive theory building suggested by John Frow and rearticulated in the processual approach to transgressive knowledge, discussed in chapter 1. Proletarianization is revealed in the process of becoming proletarian. If the process can be identified, the picture takes shape. For this reason, there is much to be gained by referring to the continuous contingencies of the formation.

One of the most pertinent efforts to describe this set of possibilities came from two German writers, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kulge. Working across, against and with Jurgen Habermas, their *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* attempted to differentiate the proletarian public sphere from the all-consuming bourgeois one that set the standard for political movement, or what became known as social movements. Their contribution played with how Enlightenment structures of power and social structure created a system of relations that make mediated communications an avenue for the realization of multiple sites of lived experience. Through the emergence of a "counter-public sphere" media could mobilize a proletarian form of experience that

22. Marlin, Randal (2002) Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion. Ontario: Broadview Press: 82.

"will open the analytical concepts of political economy *downward*."[23] This emphasis on structures forming from above, hinted at the challenge associated with defining counterpublics from below.

Yet the fact remained that concepts linking the proletarian idea with the public sphere required inventive efforts at *deconstituting* the aggregation of those very concepts themselves. Consequently, every proletarian social, cultural and economic formation – all proletarian ideology – is the result of "instrumentalization" from above.[24]The state and its organizational systems – the courts, churches, schools, army, financial markets, police – aim at the systematic maintenance of bourgeois power. Even as the dialectical nature of power becomes obvious – giving some power up to the army or relying on the managerialism of bankers and "intermediaries" for continued control – the public sphere has been determined by modern historical notions of the instrumentality of capital and the state. Capital survives to dominate the public sphere because of its "flexible and accommodating shape."[25]

Fredric Jameson reinforced Nekt's and Kluge's efforts at defining the proletarian public space, noting that despite the best intentions of the authors, it became a study of "the rudiments of a theory of the bourgeois public space instead."[26] This led Jameson to suggest there was the lack of "a more adequate philosophical language – which is to say a new public language:" this absence of language has continued to plague those discussions conceived within a class-based discourse that reproduces the ideology of progress from above.[27]

From the perspective of this study Negt's and Kluge's model is constituted by recourse to a vertical set of metaphors. The binary class sensibility of bourgeois and proletarian and the determined relationship to capital that has dominated the language of the progressive interpretation of the public sphere cannot comprehend the failure of progress on that same trajectory.

The Internet sets up a different modality that offers a disorienting perspective. The Internet has offered a new set of language possibilities for proletarians, even while they may be meaningless and irrational to those who continue to use established Enlightenment language within their bourgeois class orientation. This is not to say that Negt and Kluge did not offer perspicacity in identifying core communication considerations within the

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23.Negt Oskar, Kluge, Alexander (1993) Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere. University of Minnesota Press: xlviii.

24.Negt Oskar, Kluge, Alexander (1993) Public Sphere andExperience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere. University of Minnesota Press: 66.

25.Negt Oskar, Kluge, Alexander (1993) Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere. University of Minnesota Press: 69.

26.Jameson, Fredric (1988) On Negt and Kluge, October 46: 42

27.Jameson, Fredric (1988) On Negt and Kluge, October 46: 49

proletarian public sphere. Rather it is to point out that the tenets of their ideas about the proletariat are shaky indeed. That is, the public space as conceived by Negt and Kluge is understood only in so far as it is evacuated, to be filled with the opposite of progress. Contemporary proletarianization in its relation with the Internet, marks the point at which the otherwise anticipated progress - the teleology - is regressive. The Internet offers this regression by creating a phantom of progress. The illusory sense of progress is magnified, but through the prism of inverted power. The proletariat find themselves empowered with image and voice, gaining nothing in social or economic power as a result. Despite the absence of power they reconfigure their lives as a dead end. This new nihilism is marked by the abandonment of pre-existing ideas about meaning within teleology. Yet, of course, they operate only through globalized capitalism. In this scenario, the chosen proletarian perspective is that there is no public sphere and there may be no proletariat. At this point, to revisit Jameson, language must be invented.

Proletarianization may be a nihilistic position on no continuum. It is not however, a pessimistic reading of the end of history, because it is full of history. Rather it is more like "the intoxication of deliberate irrationality" and demands to be known and will be discussed in later chapters.[28] Phenomena that deliberately move against rationality are especially challenging because their constituents are magnified by the Internet.

To add to the challenge of how the Internet has problematized both the language and the category of proletarian, the concept of the public sphere itself can now be viewed as "nostalgic" according to Janet Newman.[29] Her suggestion is that new discourses of public are emerging to produce a "public imaginary." In arriving at this conclusion, she suggested the following:

> Indeed the notions of public domain, public sphere, public realm, and public sector fail to capture the fluid, dynamic and elusive character of publicness. A succession of cultural theorists have argued that notions of the public are constituted and contested; formed through ever changing discourses that produce new conceptions of publicness and new spatial imaginaries.[30]

The importance of this perspective is that the Internet constructs publicness constituted with newly imagined possibilities. Nostalgic claims about the previously existing categories of "public" have little to offer in the Internet era.

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28. Vollmann, William (2005) "Friedrich Nietzsche: The Constructive Nihilist," The New York Times, August 14.

29. Newman, Janet, "Remapping the public," Cultural Studies, Vol 21, No. 6, November 2007: 887-909, 905 and 888.

30. Newman, Janet, "Remapping the public," Cultural Studies, Vol 21, No. 6, November 2007: 887-909 (888).

Chapter 4
Articulating class with technology

Political technology

A study of the Internet is the study of politics. In this study, the politics is about the proletarian class formation, proletarianization. While some libertarian advocates - most famously, John Perry Barlow with, I suspect now less fame - have suggested that the Internet pushed us into a new virtual context, it has not removed the material conditions in which human beings live. Imagining the virtuality of cyberspace risks leaping over the material issues that impact everyday life. Efforts to facilitate such leaps (of faith?) seek utopia and should be skeptically encouraged, even as billions of people live and struggle to survive in the nitty gritty of the day-to-day, hoping for some kind of escape from the grind of both physical and virtual poverty. And while it is well nigh impossible to discuss how virtuality impacts those who do not have any access to it whatsoever, those who move to a place where they can have some access are those who are within proletarianization. Fundamentally then, the politics associated with the Internet is a process of engaging with power. Logically, it is informed by those with access to the Internet, yet it is also informed by those without it, whose behavior is influenced

by desire, rage and identity. Therefore, it is possible to discuss politics as a function of *both* those who are connected and those who becoming connected to the Internet.

This politics is – as Michel Foucault noted – ultimately about political economy, which is to say the struggle over power and access to it. The Internet is a new form of power constructed in a highly technical context. It is the somewhat ill defined media form that offers power, in some cases wealth, yet in most cases a type of re-presentation that is multivariate, contingent and always part of the changing global context. Fred Jameson has suggested that "a whole new theoretical coding system in which everything that went before must now be reconfigured."[1] This is the challenge of articulating technology with class and then the specifics of proletarianization, because the Internet forces, as it were this reconfiguration. And yet the Internet does not so much represent as make presence an option. Yet, because of the diversified forces that empower this presence, the Internet makes class formations indeterminate. In other words, Internet presence relies on claims to power that express the moral economy of the people who have otherwise been denied, and are transformed by their access to a presence. Silence is the alternative.

At various moments, depending on access to the technology within the global marketplace, the moral economy and the "dirt" are revealed. As I noted earlier, the Internet's moral economy operates by allowing proletarians to assert their "custom, culture and reason," using E.P. Thompson's phrase. Understanding this behavior is to understand the way moral economy operates within proletarianization and its complex fragmentary manifestations. This is because any one or all of these fragments is generally viewed by the non-proletariat as irrational, conceived as an unappealing field of interest compared to the rationality of permanent social and economic mobility: to which we will return later.

As a field of study class is "encumbered by problematic assumptions" that incorporate "socialist politics" and gender relations that operate with almost magical historical evocations to act, argues Boxer, as intellectual barriers to knowledge thereby limiting an epistemological pathway to understanding because of the history of the word itself.[2] To refer to class is to experience the weight of history that constructs it as a contested political word, whose connotations are powerful for the emotions they evoke and for the contemporary tendency to want to reject using it. To refer to class is to refer to two possible mental acts: affectionate empathy for the people and their struggle for justice and equality, or disgusted contempt for those same

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1. Which leads Jameson to note later in the article: "we still don't want to hear anything about social class."Jameson, Fredric (2003) "Symptoms of Theory or Symptoms for Theory?" Critical Inquiry, Vol. 30, No. 2, Available at URL http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/issues/v30/30n2.Jameson.html Accessed 5 June 2008.

2. Boxer, Marilyn (2007) "Rethinking the Socialist Construction and International Career of the Concept "Bourgeois Feminism"." The American Historical Review, Vol. 112 (1): 131-158 (133).

people as individuals and collectively. Mike Featherstone suggested for example, that contemporary treatment of the working class is characterized by a type of revulsion that he terms the "disgust function," in which this "other" is viewed as a foreign species or an exotic tribe which the middle class seeks to move away from.[3] The beauty of this description is that it is visceral. It's as if nothing good can be achieved in this space, as the physical act of turning away reinforces contempt for the revolting.

Added to this is the challenge of using class based terms that can be considered to have pretty well slid into some ill-defined mischaracterizations: what for example does "bourgeois" mean in the era of McMansions; what is "wealth" in the era of massive, trillion dollar state-sponsored pension funds for workers?

Furthermore, there is a blind spot in the technology literature where the relationship between class and technology is concerned, although there are exceptions, including Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden*.[4] This is – yet again – the product of the American conceit that it is a classless society. American researchers and academics reflect this culture in their writing, thereby reinforcing the blind spot. As I will suggest later in this chapter, some of the myopia has segued into identity studies, as a way of omitting the challenge of class analysis by replacing it with culture and identity. The blind spot is reinforced by the American (and due to the Internet) an increasingly global view that the national and human ambition finds "freedom" in the ability to consume with convenience.[5] Consumption culture expresses itself as a commitment to convenience and is socially constructed deep within modern capitalism. Slack and Wise note that convenience has grown beyond common sense, so that "convenience becomes a problem when the value of convenience and the desire to achieve convenience comes to dominate technological culture." Furthermore:

> A perpetual state of dissatisfaction with who and what we are is a final consequence of the body as having limits to overcome. We can never get to where we are going fast enough. We can never go everywhere there is to go... This perpetual state of dissatisfaction fuels, and is fueled by, the production and marketing of conveniences of all kinds.[6]

For its part, the Internet has reproduced and generated informational convenience within the broadening consumption culture that the Internet feeds.

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3. Featherstone, Mike (1996) "Localism, Globalism & Cultural Identity." In (Eds) R. Wilson and W. Dissananyake, *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press: 46-77 (49).

4. Marx, Leo (1964 / 2000) The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America. New York: Oxford University Press.

5. Slack, Jennifer Daryl and Wise, John Macgregor, (2005) Culture and Technology: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang: 28.

6. Slack Jennifer Daryl and Wise, John Macgregor (2005) Culture and Technology: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang: 40.

The blind spot is further invigorated by the American view that the national ambition is realized in the way the middle class acts as consumers. This consumption fetish has been further reinforced within the current phase of WTO-style globalization by the dual economic pressures of importing cheaply made consumer items from China and India, having exported US manufacturing jobs to those countries in a corporate process of labor arbitrage. One commentator amongst many hundreds making similar claims laid it out:

> What America needs is a clear strategy to sustain its middle class in a global economy that has just integrated over 2 billion workers in China, India and the former Soviet Union.[7]

The hegemonic influence of the American way of life is linked inextricably to the Internet and its technology. Indeed, the Internet has operated as the publicizer, commercializer and promoter par excellence of consumer culture. It has allowed for "the niching of America" and the rest of the world, creating target audiences for the selling of everything.[8] Furthermore, the US has utilized Chinese and Indian low cost labor to provide relatively low cost technologies that offer further information convenience in the Internet. Debates about digital divides and information poverty notwithstanding the Internet is global. However, to reiterate, American political culture especially promotes the dominant notion of class that is expressed by the term "middle class." Since World War 2 this term has been the determining concept around class and the constant promise of upward mobility. It embodies what novelist and essayist Marilynn Robinson noted is the blindspot of Manifest Destiny: "Americans never think of themselves as sharing fully in the human condition, and therefore beset as all humankind is beset."[9] Is it any wonder that the hegemon and its citizenry have difficulty understanding the impact of their culture? Proletarianization marks the point of departure, where the Internet makes it possible for the rest of humankind to express their views on the human condition as the dominant American perspective on class fades.

Further evidence of the impact of US ideology on class analysis and its relation to technology appears in Carroll Pursell's *Technology in Postwar America*. In keeping with other books on technology it avoids unsettling issues such as class and politics. Pursell's approach to class is indexed under "class

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7. Borosage, Robert, (2008) "A New US Strategy in the Global Economy." June 17, URL at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-l-borosage/a-new-us-strategy-in-the_b_107696.html

8. Penn, Mark and Zalesne, E. K. (2009) Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes. New York: Twelve: xvi.

9. Wood, James (2008) "The Homecoming." The New Yorker, September 8: 76-78 (76). Robinson, Marilynne (1998) The Death of Adam. New York: Picador: 154.

action suits," which is actually about property rights for those with already existing claims to private ownership.[10] The approach is indicative of how the blind spots are operationalised.

Some of the ideas that constitute our understanding of the relationship between class, technology and the Internet are discussed in this chapter, which is heavily historicized. The perspective is necessarily jittery because of the indeterminate nature of the relationship between proletarian class formations and technology in the Internet era. However, in keeping with my commitment to pursue transgressive knowledge within transdisciplinarity, the examination of class and technology is essential to understanding proletarianization.

At a linguistic level, this chapter's title offers a logical syntactical system of thought: class is added to technology by the use of the conjunction "and." The dominant view of technology within the culture is that our concepts tend to operate with these conjunctions, thereby normalizing the relationship in an unproblematic way. According to this view, life is constructed as a series of accretions of technological improvements that build a teleological ideology.[11] In effect, the fluidity of the process in which proletarianization emerges is rich in potential, yet not accurately described by the dominant conjunctions which, to restate Jameson, incorporates class within the reconfigured coding system of the Internet. Proletarianization is often emptied of potential because of the disabling energy of the conjunctions that control the system of meaning.

Veblen and Institutional Economics

Thorstein Veblen established a model for explaining the process of contemporary class formation and its relationship with technology which is at once an expression of outrage, nostalgia and theoretical possibility. Veblen took special umbrage at the US approach to material accumulation that drove industrialization, urbanization and consumption. He initiated a strong tradition of critique about class in the US with his 1899 book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, a study of the rise of wealth and the "non-productive consumption of time" by those seeking leisure. Veblen established the study of evolutionary cultural trends emerging with unstoppable force within industrial capitalism. It is astounding that his work has not found a central place in cultural studies, although that can be seen as one of the limitations of "the cultural turn" which rejected political economy and the deterministic view of the relationship between economics and culture. Veblen was not

10. Pursell, Carroll (2007) Technology in Postwar America: A History. New York: Columbia University Press: 169-170.

11. Nye, David, N. (2006) Technology Matters: Questions to live with. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 24.

an impartial observer of the emergence of the urban life that resulted from industrial transformation. He viewed the rise of the culture that powered the US out of bucolic idealism into a devalued set of social relations due to "predatory behaviour." This prevailing force field of the capitalist enterprise with its engine of material demands sickened Veblen, in that it violated human dignity which had offered so much in the utopian rural settler-frontier phases of the American Dream. (And to which Leo Marx's work added depth). Veblen's approach offers a model of the class formations within industrial urban capitalism that articulated each class to the other in both a symbolic and material sense, through the evolution of technology. This was the case in Veblen's description of the conspicuous consumption of the leisure class in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

> The leisure class stands at the head of the social structure in point of reputability; and its manner of life and its standards of worth therefore afford the norm of reputability for the community. The observance of these standards, in some degree of approximation, becomes incumbent upon all classes lower in the scale.[12]

Conceived as a social and economic construction approximating a pyramidal system of relations, Veblen's model displayed a literary turn towards lived experience, even as the weight of economics directed his theory building. His sociology was a combination of outspoken resistance to the dehumanizing of the everyday that predatory business practices produced and an indictment of the social and political world that uncritically welcomed the deconstruction of natural rights in favor of the machine process of development. The consequence of this process, he wrote in *Theory of the Business Enterprise* was the "disciplining force of the barbarian culture."[13]

If the machines of technology were dystopian to Veblen, even more noteworthy were his criticisms of the cultural impact of technology on the class which was incorporated into it.

> In the nature of the case the cultural growth dominated by the machine industry is of a skeptical, matter-of-fact complexion, materialistic, unmoral, unpatriotic, undevout. The growth of habits of thought in the industrial regions and centres particularly, runs in this direction... The machine discipline however, touched wider and wider circles of the popular and touches them in an increasingly intimate and coercive manner. In the nature of the case, therefore the resistance opposed to this cultural trend is given by the machine discipline on the grounds of received conventions weakens with the passage of time. The spread of materialistic, matter-of-fact preconceptions takes place at a cumulatively accelerating rate, except in so far as some of the cultural factors, alien to the machine discipline comes in to inhabit its spread and keep its disintegrating influence within bounds.[14]

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12. Veblen, Thorstein (1912) The Theory of the Leisure Class: An economic study of institutions. New York: The MacMillan Company: 84.

13. Veblen, Thorstein (1904) Theory of the Business Enterprise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 322.

14. Veblen, Thorstein (1904) Theory of the Business Enterprise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 372.

Veblen's explorations of class relations and the interstices of their connections with each other through a kind of material meta-psychology were described again and again as the "habit of thought" within the machine discipline which makes a forceful claim for consideration.[15] This is especially pertinent in the formation of globalized connections between people through the Internet, to which we will turn soon enough.

In contrast to Marxist theory, Veblen did not endorse dialectical Hegelian approaches in a class analysis ending in revolutionary action. Rather, Veblen considered industrialization like an ocean. It would sweep away the possibilities for human attainment that had been achieved through claims for natural and human rights. His insights into the diminution of legal rights – natural rights giving way to property rights, within the corporate model of development – explored how property rights emerged with John Locke's argument that the natural order of human rights was really about property rights ordained by The Creator. For Veblen, the metaphysics of natural rights broke down in the face of the system of business principles and contract law, in a kind of triumphal orchestration of industrial logic. "So settled did this habit of thought become," wrote Veblen, "that no question was entertained as to the truth of the assumption."[16] This belief in property rights *a la* Locke, became "common sense," despite evidence that such rights were culturally constructed in the psychological space where habitual demands were controlled by the class with the greatest interests in promoting it. For Veblen, European approaches to ideology, as proposed by Marx were limited in the US. Ideology was trumped by the disturbingly rational energy of US industrial machinery, producing a logic of impending doom as the system grew to flatten the rights of the working class.[17] In this sense, Veblen's approach symbolizes a non-dialectical solution to oppression because his theory of the future endorses the utopian American spirit of classlessness – if only the habits of capitalists' to redefine "rights" did not predominate.

Veblen's evolutionary method of analysis offered, as he suggested in a footnote, a "genetic account of the modern concepts of ownership."[18] This image of a genetic system was typically perspicacious, in the sense that the Internet is now a network of relations that articulates class and property rights in powerfully new and complex ways. The Internet's complexity lends itself to this model, which Veblen described as "concatenation" – suggesting that the forces of industry when combined with private property rights

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15. Veblen, Thorstein (1904) Theory of the Business Enterprise: 78

16. Veblen, Thorstein (1904) Theory of the Business Enterprise: 78

17. Hodgson, Geoffrey (2007) "The Revival of Veblenian Institutional Economics." Journal Of Economic Issues. Vol. XLI, No. 2, June: 325 – 340. "Through the individual mechanism of habit, the framing, shifting and constraining capacities of social institutions give rise to new perceptions and dispositions within individuals. This is a key element in the Veblenian legacy." p 331

18. Veblen, Thorstein (1915) The Theory of Business Enterprise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 72

were determined to close off the promise of human freedom by the nature of their interwoven and interdependent pyramidal relationship. For Thorstein Veblen, US industrial capitalism was not a pleasant place.

Reading Veblen's teleology of industrial power offers a critical perspective on the contemporary world and its industrial and post-industrial history.

> The modern technology has, in a manner, cut away the ground out of which it first grew and from which it gathered force to reshape the course of history. It has made it impossible for any community to stand peaceably outside of the great complex of nations.[19]

Such negativity is an unwelcome value in an optimistic culture such as the US, where the contemporary globalization of today has taken on dimensions Veblen could not have imagined. Similarly, criticism guided by claims to class justice and a commitment to emancipation were unwelcome. Perhaps it is for this reason that Veblen has not appeared as an analytical beacon in the years since his death in 1929, with the exception being Institutional Economics. However, the conditions of the Internet era of globalization suggest that Veblen's approach offers a model for understanding the superstructures of the US model of capitalism, which is the dominant global form of capitalism. Furthermore, Veblen's view of peace was prescient (given the role of the Internet in contemporary wars, especially the creation of pilotless Predator drones) suggesting that "improvement in the technological situation... enabled a closer and more coercive control to be exercised over larger areas, and at the same time enabled a more massive aggregate of warlike force to strike more effectively at a greater distance."[20]

Veblen's absence from contemporary discussions of technology suggests that the tone of contemporary criticism is incorporated into the fashion business, which is to say, into contemporary solution solving within the established ideological apparatus. It would indeed be depressing if evolutionary economics had ended with Veblen's teleology. John Commons' took the critiques of predatory and pecuniary capitalism that became unsustainable in the late 1920s - as Veblen had predicted before the Great Depression - and proposed Institutional Economics as an intellectual counterpoint to Veblen's dystopian predictions about US capitalism.

Commons was less vitriolic than Veblen. He was concerned with proposing solutions that would manage capitalism while building liberalism around a consensus based on models of governance that fit with the diversification of an industrial society. Commons' 1931 essay, "Institutional Economics," is the founding work of the school and still the touchstone among evolutionary economists. Commons' insight was the need to theorize the individual interest within the collective interest, which he did by painting a permanently unfolding flow of ("collective actions") negotiations between contend-

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19. Veblen, Thorstein (1915) The Theory of Business Enterprise. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: 306.

20. Veblen, Thorstein (1917 / 1998) The Nature of Peace. New Brunswick: New Jersey: 15.

ing forces.[21] That he authored his particular version of a technocratic liberal society in the midst of the New Deal, gives added meaning to the notion that context is indeed valuable in promoting specific types of creative thinking – or contingent solutions.

Reading Commons' essay now, it is clear it is time bound by the political and policy landscape of the times. Commons' policy action proposals were made in the belief that rationality could be introduced to policy making through rule making agreements among contending forces. The outcome would be "the public interest". His belief was that agreed goals of open inquiry were class-blind: to all intents and purposes Commons' was quintessentially a liberal champion and the progenitor of the ideal of cooperative American classlessness that would emerge within industrialization. He also influenced the American propensity for belief in rationality in policy making.

In contrast, it is instructive to see how Commons' aim for classless public interest is invoked in the contemporary situation. Philip Agre for example, suggested that Commons' ideal for a system of institutional rules to govern democratic society will be worked out through "the Internet ... by promoting the diverse mechanisms of collective bargaining by which a democratic society orders its affairs."[22] Agre further imagined a democracy built on a model of the "massed creativity of diverse people in diverse situations," forgetting that in the current context the discreet charm of the political aspirations of liberal democracy may no longer be the prevailing rules. (Indeed, proletarianization makes this point). Parting ways with this kind of naive articulation of the Internet with liberal democracy is necessary, as is the need to recognize that Commons and Veblen offered different perspectives that suggested that solutions would emerge through rational conceptions of society. My point is that proletarianization does not allow a kind of luxuriating in the taken-for-granted assumptions of US-style ideals of utopian classlessness.

The US Empire's technology

Combining the threat and fear of sliding from wage-earning into penury is an engine for all manner of innovations that economists and their political cohorts consider the winning recipe of capitalism. It is also the point at which criticism has been directed at the US approach to technology, which has not only generated "material abundance" but spawned a sense of "entitlement" to that abundance, as Michael Adas cryptically wrote in *Domin-*

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21. Commons, John (1931) Institutional Economics. American Economic Review. Vol. 21: 648-657. Available at URL http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/commons_insteconomics.html

22. Agre, Philip, (undated) "Growing a Democratic Culture: John Commons on the Wiring of Civil Society," MIT Communications Forum. URL at http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/papers/agre.html, accessed 16 May, 2008.

ance by Design.[23] Adas added that the US rise to "technological supremacy" is paradoxical, because with the attack on US civilians on September 11, 2001, "Americans were forced to recognize that the vulnerability of their society has increased even as their nation has emerged as the hegemon of the global order:"

> The paradox between the unprecedented power of the United States and the fact that the civilian population has since been at unprecedented risk of assault by foreign adversaries encapsulates fundamental challenges that are likely to shape public discourse and temper U.S. foreign policy decisions well into the twenty-first century.[24]

According to Adas, an assault on the American way of life is possible because the nation's adversaries can act through the very same technological innovations which had previously protected US citizens. Previously existing veils of security - "conceits" - that denied the experience of fear and death in war have been lifted, according to Adas, ushering in a new mode of experience. Culturally, the assumed upward class trajectory that accompanies capital's expansion is ruptured by shared technologies. Other realities now press themselves relentlessly on the U.S and other advanced Euro-centric societies, merging and melding with realities on the ground. Any analysis of class must acknowledge this redrawing of the map due to the Internet in the context of globalization, as I discuss in the chapters on pornography and jihad.

This is not to say that claims to middle class material life have evaporated. In the U.S., such claims continue to be predicated on the deeply embedded culture of proletarian avoidance, defined by its opposite, upward mobility. Escaping the dirt of work is a central plank of US democracy. "The pursuit of happiness" itself can be read in the *US Constitution* as the ambition for the unfettered pursuit of material well being. US culture amounts to the endorsement of the relationship between classlessness and technology that is unraveling in Adas's perspective and in terms of proletarianization, which as I discussed earlier and suggest in the chapter on the abject, is no longer a logical continuum of forward and upward progression.

The history of technology is prone to a top-heavy overburden of the ideology of forward, unimpeded progress. In *A Culture of Improvement: Technology and the Western Millennium* a survey of technology and civilization, Robert Friedel wrote that:

> In many ways, this entire history of the West's millennium of technology has been about freedom and power and the *uneasy* relations between the two. Technology and the pursuit of improvement are ultimate expressions of

23. Adas, Michael (2006) Dominance by Design. Cambridage, MA.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: 389.

24. Adas, Michael (2006) Dominance by Design. Cambridge, MA.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: 387.

> freedom, of the capacity of humans to reject the limitations of their past and their experience, to *transcend* the boundaries of their biological capacities and *their social traditions* (italics added).[25]

Friedel's rush to move from a discussion of "uneasy" subjects such as power to the "ultimate expressions of freedom," indicate how jaundiced the historical imagination can become, as it is swept up into the ideology of transcendence that accompanies technology. That Friedel's book does not index class and has one reference to "workers" further indicates the dimensions of the challenge in discussing the full range of class in the context of technology in the US. It is as if technology has this great leveling affect whereby utopian democracy emerges almost mystically out of technology itself.

Bringing technology and the cultural assumptions that drive it into an association with class concerns is not a commonly conceived project. In fact, the forward momentum of technology and class theory has been about an entitlement to wealth within a constantly unfolding movement of progressive history. More culturally evocative yet has been the image of rising out of one's origins, "transcendence" as we saw above, or better still, ascension. Indeed, Christian images of Jesus ascending into heavenly perfection are so enmeshed in US and western European culture through everything from stained glass window iconography to religious sermons, that the transformative power of wealth is invested with heavenly and utopianistic connotations. The emergence of the Rapture Culture with the "Left Behind" genre of Christian literature, comics, films and the associated political movement is an extension of this cultural formation that relies on irrational belief fed by the Internet, which I discuss in the chapters on rationality and jihadists.[26] This imagery within the Western world plays a part in the construction of class meaning: escape from "the world." Of course, it is not restricted to the sacred.

In *The Economics and Sociology of Capitalism*, Joseph Schumpeter referred to the process by which the working person, the craftsman and the peasant could "make the great leap out of their class," when a member of the family had "*done something novel*" thereby "getting out of the conventional rut" (italics in the original).[27] The question this leads Schumpeter to ask is: "Why and how do classes change their relative positions?"[28]

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25. Friedel, Robert (2007) A Culture of Improvement: Technology and the Western Millenium: Cambridge, MA.: 543.

26. Frykholm, Amy Johnson (2004) Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

27. Schumpeter, Joseph (1991) The Economics and Sociology of Capitalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 253-254.

28. Schumpeter, Joseph (1991) The Economics and Sociology of Capitalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 254.

In keeping with evolutionary economics, the field in which he played a role, Schumpeter criticized theories of late modern capitalism and the social order of the day in "The Process of Creative Destruction," which appeared as a chapter in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*.[29] In this provocative piece of writing, Schumpeter came to the conclusion that "perfect" competition" was nothing more than "an entirely imaginary golden age,"combined with "wishful thinking."[30] For Schumpeter, as for Veblen and institutional economists, in dealing with "capitalism we are dealing with an evolutionary process" and it is necessary to cut through the mythology, the fantasy and the false claims it makes as part of the sustenance of the hegemons which publicize its greatness.[31] "Industrial mutation" suggested Schumpeter, "incessantly revolutionizes the evolutionary structure from within" so that the prospects for "the workingman," as he called the industrialized urban laboring classes, were sure to result in productivity increases and thus more purchasing power of goods and services.[32] Here too, despite Schumpeter's criticism of monopoly capitalism, is the optimism for a consistent forward progress, if, as it were, we could only evolve better. The people most likely to succeed in the US model and thus shift their class affiliation were those with "aptitude," Schumpeter argued in his 1926 essay "Social Classes in an Ethnically Homogeneous Environment."[33] His theory of class incorporated a sociology of change that reflected Schumpeter's immigrant optimism for future possibilities in the American new world. As his writing went from post World War 1 Europe to the US, he saw class as the lens through which to view capitalism. It was Eurocentric in its vision of life in the US. Technology became the means by which the lens was refined. It comes as no surprise then that Schumpeter is promoted by today's technology-boosters such as *The Economist*, as an iconoclast who saw "inequality and turbulence" as "a small price to pay for material progress."[34]

The counterpoints to this perspective that have emerged in the US labor movement have been characterized by an appeal to "exceptionalism" to the conditions in which class analysis operates. In *Subterranean Fire*, for example, Sharon Smith described four claims for why the US is unlike other nations in its class formations. They are:

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29. Schumpeter, Joseph (1942) Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, New York: Harper and Brothers.

30. Schumpeter, Joseph (1942) Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, New York: Harper and Brothers: 81.

31. Schumpeter, Joseph (1942) Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, New York: Harper and Brothers: 82.

32. Schumpeter, Joseph (1942) Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, New York: Harper and Brothers: 83.

33. Schumpeter, Joseph (1951) Imperialism and Social Classes, (Ed. Paul Sweezy) New York: Augustus Kelley inc. :211-213.

34. The Economist (2007) "In praise of entrepreneurs."April 28: 94.

- The absence of a feudal class, unlike Europe's modern class founded around the landed aristocracy
- Upward mobility combined with the impact of American geographical spaces
- Immigration's role in structurally dividing new arrivals who thought of themselves as a "temporary proletariat"
- US prosperity.[35]

Smith argues that these theories of exceptionalism have undermined class consciousness and that an awakening of such consciousness will bring US workers together with international workers. The point may well be that an appeal to class consciousness is a type of nostalgia. In Smith's Trotskyite analysis, the Internet and new communication tools do not appear, suggesting that a significant amount of work needs to be done among labor activists to bring it into line with the likes of Veblen and Schumpeter. It is into such a space that another perspective on class and technology can be added.

Mash up

Some of the extraordinary social policy achievements that have taken place in the US and Canada, Western Europe and select developed nations such as Australia and New Zealand since World War 2 have been, as Slavoj Žižek noted, notable victories that stand Veblen's dismal view of history on its head.[36] For example, the list of achievements for otherwise powerless classes includes consensus on and legal claims and codes that define human rights, employment conditions, paid retirement, universal suffrage and women's rights, children's rights, health care, literacy and public education.

Meanwhile for billions of people nothing much has changed in a material or social sense. Class struggle, class warfare, call it what you will, has not faded from view. Even at its best, the types of democracy in play over the past few hundred years have not delivered equitable distribution of resources across nations and the planet. The promised solutions of capitalism have not produced equity. The promised solutions of socialism and communism have not produced equity either. Meanwhile, the history of class struggle cannot be described by a meta-theory of class because global social and economic development has been consistently uneven across nations and regions, where mass movements are anything but well defined. In the US, the situation is complicated even more by the way the black working class is hidden behind what *New York Times* columnist Bob

35. Smith, Sharon (2006) Subterranean Fire: A history of working class radicalism in the United States. Chicago: Haymarket Books: 5-8.

36. Zizek, Slavoj, (2002) "A Plea for Leninist Intolerance." Critical Inquiry, Winter. URL at http://www.egs.edu//faculty/zizek/zizek-a-plea-for-leninist-intolerance.html, accessed May 2006.

Herbert called "the Other America," recalling Michael Harrington's 1962 book of the same title, which was launched into public discussion in a review by Dwight MacDonald in *The New Yorker* in January 1963.[37]

The shift from a "mass movement" theory of modernist politics to truncated fragmentary class interests can be seen around the time technology took an individualistic turn. This turn was described most eloquently by the post-modern movement as it emerged in the late 1970s, with remarkable prescience by Jean-Francoise Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*. His major contribution in explaining the relationship between class and technology was to frame "the question of knowledge in advanced industrial societies" through computerization: here knowledge undergoes a process of "exteriorization" where it becomes part of the day-to-day circulation of commodities and transforms civil society and the meaning of relationships.[38] Lyotard foresaw something of the fragmentation of traditional class ideas, but he was too early (the late 1970s) to see how previously contested concepts of society could be more deeply still challenged by the new knowledge attached to individual computer devices.

The seeds of fragmentation were already seen in Europe as the market emerged in the post-World War 2 context. Organizationally, the dissolution of European mass movements was nicely put by Louis Althusser to the twenty-second congress of the French Communist Party in July 1977:

> In the best of cases, it is conceivable that the union of the people of France may become something quite different from the means to a new electoral balance, but is rather aimed, over and above the organizations of the Left, at the popular masses themselves. *Why address the popular masses in this way?* (italics added) To tell them, even if still only as a hint, that they will have to *organize* themselves autonomously, in original forms, in firms, urban districts and villages, around the questions of labour and living conditions, the questions of housing, education, health, transport, the environment, etc.; in order to define and defend their demands, first to prepare for the establishment of a revolutionary state, then to maintain it, stimulate it and at the same time force it to 'wither away'. Such mass organizations, which no one can define in advance and on behalf of the masses, already exist or are being sought in Italy, Spain and Portugal, where they play an important part, despite all difficulties. If the masses seize on the slogan of the union of the people of France and interpret it in this mass sense, they will be re-establishing connections with a living tradition of popular struggle in our country and will be able to help give a new

37. Herbert, Bob (2008) "Still Reeling After All These Years." New York Times, I January, URL Accessed 5 January, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/01/opinion/01herbert.html?oref=slogin, Keefe, Linda (2010) "Dwight Macdonald and the Poverty Discourse, 1960-1965: The Art and Power of a Seminal Book Review. Poverty and Public Policy, Vol. 2, Issue 2, URL accessed 3 June 2010 http://wwwpsocommons.org/ppp/vol2/issue2/art6

38. Lyotard, Jean- Francoise (1984) The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, The University of Minnesota: 4.

> content to the political forms by which the power of the working people will be exercised under socialism.[39]

Althuser was a French Communist Party organizer as well as a theorist, who saw the rewriting for mass action on the wall: probably, more accurately, like Lyotard he saw it on the emerging computer screen, which was Minitel, a national French telecommunications initiative offering universal access to the population, which anticipated the Internet by up to 10 years.[40] While Minitel is a story of national development failure when placed against the monopolistic might of the installed base of the Microsoft-IBM franchise - the Personal Computer – it is an important sideline to the changes Althusser was outlining. Those changes were to all intents and purposes forms of individual life that found their realization in the quest for individual autonomy, micro-managed levels of political action and popular struggle. Even Althusser's suggestion of "a revolutionary state" may not be far removed from Jefferson's notion of a continuous remaking of the American republic through a "little revolution now and then," following Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786-87.[41]

In contrast, Heilbroner and Singer describe the development of the US industrial labor system and the culture in which it flourished: the "pervasive air of American democracy" was pragmatic and non-revolutionary, with a commitment "to better the lot of the worker under the existing scheme of things rather than striking out against the whole framework of capitalist society."[42] This was not merely a political strategy, it was a pragmatism borne of real possibilities for a unique form of democracy that offered mass participation within the polity of everyday life. It is not a stretch to suggest that The American Dream is about this classless opportunism, where labor is always at the point of realizing its "dream" in a Jeffersonian myth of representative democracy laced with permanent upward mobility. The dream has been constructed in the culture in such a way that it has become the prevailing ideology.[43]

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39. Althusser, Louis (1977) "On the Twenty-Second Congress of the French Communist Party." URL Accessed 1 October, 2008 http://www.marxists.org/reference/archives/althusser/1977/22nd-congress.htm

40. Kessler, J (1992) "Internet Digital Libraries," "France," Chapter 2/4. URL http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Collections/FYIFrance/1996/FYIFrance.11.17.96pt2.txt

41. Jefferson, Thomas (1787) January 30, "Correspondence to James Madison." Thomas Jefferson Papers, Series 1, General Correspondence, Library of Congress.

42. Heilbroner, Robert, Singer, Aaron (1998) The Economic Transformation of America. Wadsworth.

43. Thomas Frank argued in What's the Matter with Kansas for a new emotional terrain built around the hot issue buttons. "The great dream of conservatives ever since the thirties has been a working class movement that for once takes their side of the issues, that votes Republican and reverses the achievements of working class movements of the past" (2004: 14).

Theories of class and technology: multiple articulations

Questions about the relationship between class formations and information technology produce few clear answers. An often overlooked aspect of the contemporary approach to forward and upward mobility is the way discussions about Internet and technology policy operate within a limited range of logic. Consequently, in the 1990's class became invisible as the language of policy making incorporated triumphalist notions of market solutions to everything. The "political economy of culture" collapsed into this market oriented approach, as I show in the chapter on public policy, leaving behind an area of research that has been described as "problematic, under-researched and under illuminated."[44] The dominance of economics and finance can be illustrated by observing how the description in the late 1990s of the National Information Infrastructure and the Global Information Infrastructure would become "a reality" when it was understood that "market needs and an expectation of a profitable return are appropriate incentives to drive such investments."[45] Class moved out of the pubic policy discussion to be replaced with "the development, adoption and diffusion of technologies" and "the active involvement of the private sector."[46] Meanwhile, education and training became code for class in the lead up to the privatization of the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network as the Internet, and in the language of what Hughes calls the "New Growth Compact," public policy was driven by "the acceleration of productivity" that "helped individuals and the private sector."[47] For its part, technology policy was linked with education so that "much of the payoff from investments in education lies in the future."[48] The ultimate goal was the relationship between "the entire innovative system" and "America's competitiveness strategy."

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44. Wittell, Andreas (2004) "Culture, Labour and Subjectivity: For a Political Economy from Below," Culture and Class. No. 84: 11- 29: 11.

45. Spacek, Thomas (1997) "Approaches for Maximizing GII Impacts on Sustainable Development." In (Eds)B. Kahin and E. Wilson, National Information Infrastructure: Vision and Policy Design. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press: 508-532: 515.

46. Hughes, Kent (2005) Building the Next American Century. The Past and Future of American Economic Competitiveness. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 364.

47. Hughes, Kent (2005) Building the Next American Century. The Past and Future of American Economic Competitiveness. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 364, 372.

48. Hughes, Kent (2005) Building the Next American Centure. The Past and Future of American Economic Competitiveness. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 364.

A teleological approach to policy making determined the socially constructed absence of class, replaced with the avowal of individual self-interest in an enriched world of profit.[49]

Identity Questions

If the relationship between class and technology is fraught, ideas about both fields and the Internet would not be complete without some comments on "identity." Identity and identity studies together with identity politics has become a burgeoning field within cultural studies and the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The emergence of "identity" has accompanied unease about the study of class. It is almost as if the study of identity ameliorates class anxiety. As Douglas Kellner suggested and as we shall see with discussions of Internet pornography, contemporary media constructs identity "in media culture and society against dominant conventions and morality," creating "postmodern selves which are fluid, multiple, and subject to rapid change."[50] What happens with this fluidity in the Internet era is where new notions of power emerge, because it is here that "media images ... provide the models and ideals for modeling personal identity," which are not outside of class interests.[51]Because they are "constructed" they exist within the class of whoever is making the identity claims, while adding a complicating layer to the system of meaning.

Michel Foucault's "Technologies of the Self" focused on internally and externally constructed regulations on the behavior and identity of the individual. He argued for the possibility for new forms of power, understood as a relation of the self to knowledge (or the absence thereof). This dynamic model - the discourse - offers an additional way to see identity and its potential, while keeping class, the social world one inhabits, in operation. In this configuration, the Internet becomes a kind of knowledge broker for one's identity, where technology operates across the material, the social and the psychological domains of subjectivity. Foucault's psychological domain of

49. Hughes, Kent (2005) Building the Next American Centure. The Past and Future of American Economic Competitiveness. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 365.

50. Kellner, D. (1995) Media Culture: Cultural Studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern, Routledge, NY, London: 245.

51. Kellner, D (1995) Media Culture: Cultural Studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern, Routledge, NY, London: 247.

subjectivity offers a perspective that is fungible and open to appropriation in many contexts, not least of which is the Internet.[52]

Discussion about identity needs to comprehend the phantoms and reality of class. By that I mean, the Internet produces a new salience for identity and its troubled relationship with class. As Slack and Wise noted, "The mode of communication facilitated by the Internet raises to new heights old questions about the cohesion of identity."[53] Within those old questions are questions of how class is reconstructed within the identities the Internet allows individuals to explore. To further illustrate: English academic Tony Blackshaw, writing in a *Soundings* debate, historicized class this way: "the hitherto pervasive power of class was itself finally broken by the self-emancipation of all men and women."[54] Blackshaw argued that the engine driving the emergence of individuality and the autonomy that accompanied it was the American model of consumerism. In a post-industrial model of individuality, enriched identity or multiple identity choices (just like the supermarket) offers a model of individuation where freedom is realized within the claims to identity. In many respects, who would want to argue against such a thing?

Individual emancipation is a powerful tool for exploring how political formations converge around the Internet's offer of constructed identity formation. Suffice to say, the emergence of subjectivity was the core constituent of an idea about identity that sought ethical liberation. It led in turn to "the conscious practice of freedom," according to Foucault.[55] What is often overlooked is that the relationship between individual self-realization and identity is an expression of social interactions, class. This does not resolve the issue as easily as some analysts of class might suggest:

> It is simply the case that the grammar of class does not have within its grasp an overarching narrative of sufficient power, simplicity and wide appeal to compete with individualization.[56]

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52. Foucault, Michel (1994) "Technologies of the Self, in "Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth." New York: The New Press: 225.

53. Slack Jennifer D. and Wise, John M. (2005) Technology and Culture: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang: 165.

54. Blackshaw, Tony, (2008) "The Unfortunate Fate of Class in the Time of Individualization, Contingency Consciousness and Consumerism." Soundings, Lawrence and Wishart, London. Accessed 20 June 2008, URL at http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/class_and_culture/blackshaw.html

55. Foucault, Michel, (1997) "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as the Practice of Freedom." In Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, (Ed) P. Rabinow. New York: The New Press: 285.

56. Blackshaw, Tony (2008) "The Unfortunate Fate of Class in the Time of Individualization, Contingency Consciousness and Consumerism." Soundings, Lawrence and Wishart URL at http://www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/class_and_culture/blackshaw.html

In this picture, individuality replaces class, as if identity has no class. The individual rules. Certainly the Internet offers new identities, even while those identities are unstable for the individual who claims them. But being an individual does not negate class.

Identities are formed out of social relations. Identity has a place within the domain of class, because each individual operates within the terrain of social relations. Surely some of the uncertainty is answered because the Internet offers a sense of class that lives within the social relations that are fractured by identity formations. Within these fragments of identify, social life thrives, searching and finding the interests that only class can describe. It may be best to leave open in the Internet era, the question of whether language can fully describes class and identity within it. Alternatively, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the Internet merges class and identity in the way it brings the abject into a relationship with the global network, even while the language of the abject is not traditionally inscribed within class. Proletarianization intensifies every interaction with the knowledge and experience of class and identity in the material world of the abject. As the Internet calls out (interpelates) new meanings about class and identity in new spaces, old questions will indeed appear.

Chapter 5

The Internet's abject actors

The Internet has forced a new way of conceiving the world. No longer are there clear trajectories of class, rather there are constantly transforming interactions that traverse previously unknown territories. Redefinitions of class were of little or no concern to the computer scientists Vinton Cerf and Robert Kahn when they published "A Protocol for Packet Network Intercommunication," in 1974. Their innovative scientific approach to internetworking computers made it possible to reconceptualize changing class concerns in the mobile global space. The digital communication protocols Cerf and Kahn devised are part of the story of proletarianization because their contribution went beyond technical innovation to their deep seated belief in cultural facilitation. That is, the ideas driving their model of computer-to-computer communication embodied a system that was "fundamentally non-discriminatory" (a kind of infinite interoperability where any computer and its software could communicate seamlessly and flawlessly with every other one) based on "open architecture."[1] While this is not the place to revisit the detailed technical discussion of "openness," it is important to point to the liberal tolerance reflected in Cerf's and Khan's approach. To further illustrate the point, imagine how different the original approach could have been if Cerf and Khan had developed their protocols in line with

1. The Economist (2006) "Present at the creation." June 10: 33-34.

the private interest concerns now more commonly associated with information economy and ownership through Intellectual Property Rights? Using that philosophy it is possible to speculate on how they would have begun and ended with the premise that *their* intellectual property existed within a structured proprietary communication system which they owned. This would have been more typical of the 2000s, where information is incorporated into the market, even while Internet piracy and low-to-no cost applications redefine ideas about the concept of economically "free".[2]

In fact, Cerf and Khan could well have been captives of a public system of ownership as defined by the agencies that funded their research. Kahn worked for the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), a US Government agency which in the 1970s was operating within the purview of the values generated by a commitment to "the public interest:" of finding the best technologies to create a "culture of convenience" for US citizens.[3] ARPANET enveloped a public sensibility that included the values of the military industrial complex, which the original Internet initiative served. Nevertheless, despite these contradictory versions of "the public" that were operationalised in ARPANET ranging from consumerist pleasures to military horrors, the core funding for scientific exploration came from the US Government. For his part, Cerf was at the University of California at Los Angeles, a state-based public university. I emphasize these employment connections because they incorporate the values of public effort in the US which has been attacked and reduced to a shadow of its earlier form by privatization pressure to commercialize public innovations for sale and license. In the chapter on public policy I trace the shift from "the public interest" to its "privatization" configuration.

For their part, Cerf and Khan brought a type of public interest consciousness that was at work in ARPANET that is intentionally stated here to point to its diminished value in recent times. There is no evidence that in the early 1970s, both Cerf and Khan were activist democracy theorists seeking to remake microcomputing and communications as new democracy tools. Cultural interpretations of their commitment to openness came from elsewhere, for example from French cultural theorists like Jean Francois Lyotard, whose essay "The Postmodern Condition" makes stunning reading today as I noted in the previous chapter, precisely because it was as if he took Cerf's and Khan's ideas and interpreted what they meant for social and economic relations in the digital age. Cerf's more recent efforts as Google's "chief internet evangelist" suggest that he maintains a commitment to openness. His comments on the development philosophy behind the original internet protocols support the view that the liberal model of forward looking potentiality was alive in the ideas that drove his approach.

2.Anderson, Chris (2009) Free: The Future of a Radical Price. New York: Hyperion.

3.Slack Jennifer, D. and Wise, Macgregor J. (2005) Culture and Technology: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

> We deliberately did not try to tailor the network to particular applications, because we believed there would be applications we couldn't predict. We hoped that having a very general packet-switched capability would support *anything*. So far, it has been true (emphasis added).[4]

Is it reasonable to ask a liberal technologist if he (and they are usually men) was intentionally radicalizing communications? The follow up question that must be insisted upon within communications, media and cultural studies is: did you mean the Internet to unleash what it did? Surely this is the central question that drives contemporary communication research. It mostly remains unstated because contemporary liberalism assumes the containment of excessive or incendiary media aimed at fomenting revolt and the consequent destruction of the status quo. In contrast, by utilizing the transdisciplinary approach, a deep critique of liberal values is brought into play because as I noted in the introduction, it identifies transgressive knowledge as the key constituent of proletarianization to show how it is reterritorialized both conceptually and practically. This approach identifies how emancipation can become universal through the lens of transgressive knowledge.

This approach also recognizes that the ideology of new communication technologies embodies preferential incorporation into the already existing mythology of society. Challenges to the status quo are pushed aside, as "progress" is claimed, in most cases within a consumerist model of production. In so doing, technology reproduces liberal democracy's ambitions, with claims to citizenship-through-consumption.[5]

Given this, is it possible that Cerf's comment that the Internet would "support anything" is a more radical statement than he imagined; that it can be read to mean the Internet would support all the possibilities of communication? Is "anything" the space in which there is a "potentiality" for unregulated production and its circulation, or is that claim a myth? It would appear that the "force of information" around and in anything increases the Internet's energy, perhaps even its power.[6] Theoretically, the limits of "anything" disappear into endless potential, where limits are defined by markets, human fallibility, and technological scale. Thus "anything" may be a disassembling of reality. It is a limitless type of potential. This vision of potential arises from a particular world view that has been described as: " technological teleology ... electronic eschatology ... the information revolution to end all revolutions.[7] At one level this view of the Internet defines

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4. The Economist (2006) "Present at the creation." June 10: 33-34.

5. Scammell, Margaret (2000) "The Internet and Civic Engagement: The Age of the Citizen-Consumer." Political Communication, Vol. 17, Issue 4: 351-355.

6. Massumi, Brian (2002) Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect Sensation. Durham: Duke University Press.

7. Agre, Philip (2008) "Growing a Democratic Culture: John Commons on the Wiring of Civil Society." MIT Communications Forum. Accessed 21 May, 2008. Available at http://web.mit.edu/m-i-t/conferences/

a metaphysics that offers a unitary eschatology in all things digital, while it is constrained only by the limitations of human scale and imagination.

The wider connotations of the word "anything" implies something more critical. It implies a white man's perspective on development without limits. It is instructive to ask the counter question that political economy has greatest difficulty with: What if there was no market? Is it possible for people to exist outside of the market that is imbricated within the Internet? Here I am thinking of the subaltern as it is considered as the excluded other. By "other" I mean those for whom "anything" does not yet apply – those who are so desolate that they remain beyond the processes of the market. In order to better describe proletarianization, this model of the "other" incorporates the "everything" of the Internet in a future moment of becoming. Even while the other is constrained by the historical limits of colonialism, it/they are becoming incorporated within the Internet. On the Internet, "anything" includes the places where proletarianization exists, even while it includes the absence of opportunity to share in the potential of the network and the market.

In this rumination on the relationship between the Internet and the subaltern, I will describe the contradictory articulations that "anything" fails to incorporate for the following reason: the Internet has actively deterritorialized many people even while it has territorialized others. At one level it offers the possibilities of the famously optimistic 'scapes Arjun Appadurai suggested: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes.[8] At another level the vast sea of humanity can be viewed like the rest of us, donkeys chasing digital carrots which are in turn attached to material wants: or getting nothing at all. The subaltern is not the donkeys within the market. Instead it can be considered to be both outside yet within capital and its institutions, because there is nowhere else to go. As far as the dominant economic system is concerned, economists have pronounced on the need for rational decision making in communication policy, even while market conditions do not exist. I explore some of these ideas in the following chapter. Being outside of *capitalism* in the Internet context is to be outside of *capital* as well, with no access to material opportunities. In other words, capital establishes barriers to entry to capitalism itself. That is the nature of competition. Unfortunately, some post-colonial theory and practice has produced the illusion of emancipation by state-based or private institutions (and Non-Government Organizations) creating little more than phantom capital generators. There are doors, but they never open due to the grotesque disequilibrium of capital and its processes.

This admittedly dismal view leads to one conclusion: those subjects affected by the disequilibrium of capital are abject. By being locked out of capital they become abject. The definition of abject is not applied here in the way it was used by Julia Kristeva.[9] Her notion was based on a concept

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8. Appadurai, A. (1990) "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," Theory Culture and Society, Vol 7: 295-310.

of bourgeois development, which was delimited by her notion of the unregulated body and its representations in literature and theatre – especially the work of Antonin Artaud. In Kristeva's work the privileged body is reduced to identification of the worst of its functions – the shit, pus, sweat and decay, the corpse-like detritus of the everyday and of life itself. These realizations of mortality are a result of the luxury of self-analysis; the horror of the body as it ages and dies before the cleaned, pristine mirror of the *boudoir*. The metaphors of the analyst's couch produces knowledge based in and around Freud's and Lacan's psychosexual repressions, which we in the advanced world spend vast amounts of money to escape: soap, shampoo, medicine, devices, nursing, remedies, therapy and education.

Abject as it is used here is not defined using the analytical tools that describe the absent repressed self of the decaying body and its functions. Nor indeed, do I want to head into the rabbit warren of psychoanalytical literature and related theory building. Instead, I want to draw attention to the negative process incorporated within capital – the absence of material and cultural potential when set against the potential of the digital "anything" of the Internet. This is a negation theory which evacuates value through "poverty, joblessness, illiteracy, violence or despair."[10] Indeed, incorporation into the global system while being kept from what it offers, means that the negation theory of value "assigns (them) the role of victim – the most exploited of the exploited" where life is characterized by "objective degradation," "pulverized identity," "collective masochism" and "the annihilation of the beautiful life of long ago," as Eduardo Galeano described the life of Amazonian Indians after the Spanish conquest.[11] The negation theory of the abject is one where "the boundaries of the world collapse and meld into each other" creating, as Giles Deleuze suggested, a clarifying type of energy where it is possible to see the world as it really is, "beautiful, dangerous and horrific."[12] Here, the familiar world disappears as the energy created by the collapsing boundaries offers windows to the "other," the horror of the abject, refined and enriched by everyday experience then magnified by the Internet.

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9. Kristeva, Julia (1982) Powers of Horror. New York: Columbia University Press. For an excellent working summary see Felluga, Dino (2008) "Modules on Kristeva: On the Abject," Introductory Guide to Critical Theory. URL accessed 5 April. http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html

10. Jencks, Christopher (1992) Rethinking Social Policy: Race, Poverty and the Underclass. New York: Harper Perennial: 203.

11. Galeano, Eduardo (1973 / 1977) Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent. New York: Monthly Review Press: 49 - 50.

12. Fitzgerald, John and Threadgold, Terry (2007) "Desire and the Object: in the City Becoming-Other." Cultural Studies Review, Vol. 13, (1): 105-120 (105). I am applying Deleuze's concept of the abject, from his theoretical work about the impact of drug use.

Negation expands the definition of proletarianization by drawing it into the negative energy of the abject. In order to explore this idea more fully I want to use and critique concepts from subaltern studies, which has essentialized western and modernist notions of human advancement with a model that has been determined by Marxist ideas about class struggle and incorporation into global capitalism, however critical that approach may have been. An examination of the abject in relation to the Internet opens such an approach to new interpretations and challenges.

Post-colonial subaltern ventriloquists

"How can the subaltern speak?" is more than a pure play of grammatical indulgence. In its use here, I am reclaiming the phrase used by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay that appeared in an anthology of latter-day cultural theorists in 1988.[13] In her effort to find a means of discussing the complexity of her own investment as an activist intellectual, Spivak asked: "Can the subaltern speak?" Her answer was a ground breaking account of what "subaltern" means.

Drawing on a review of Jacques Derrida and Louis Althusser, Spivak pointed to a discourse methodology that foregrounded her first world status as an intellectual then problematized her perspective with her insights as a feminist. It is a heavy subjectivity through which to portray the "Other," because Spivak was caught somewhere between the first and third worlds, speaking as an Indian woman in the west. In the days before the Internet repositioned our sensibilities through digital media, Spivak could confidently "problematize the subject to the question of how the third-world subject is represented within Western discourse."[14] She made it clear that the subaltern as subject is something mercurial. Within "the discourse of society's Other," it / they are embedded with the ideological coloring of her / my / your world, but especially her world as a subcontinental woman.[15] Spivak's deconstruction of philosophical texts about power produces a pessimism that led to her pronouncement that "The subaltern cannot speak."[16] To avoid the prospect of being a post-colonial spokesperson for the subaltern for whom she speaks, Spivak recognized the complex relationships

13. Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence (1988) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

14. Spivak, Gyatri, C. (1988) "Can the subaltern speak? In Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence, Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Board of Trustees: University of Illinois: 271.

15. Spivak Gyatri C. (1988) Can the subaltern speak? In Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence, Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Board of Trustees: University of Illinois: 272.

16. Spivak Gyatri C. (1988) Can the subaltern speak? In Nelson, Cary and Grossberg, Lawrence, Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Board of Trustees: University of Illinois: 308.

that apply in the transnational context and invokes her own ethically flawed subjectivity. Indeed, she later admitted that there was a role for someone like her in "reinscribing" the lives of the "marginalized," carefully advising: "What we do towards the texts of the oppressed is very much dependent upon where we are."[17] This position of privileged interpretation became an increasing liability for subaltern studies in the Internet era, perhaps even more for Spivak herself, given that "where she was" was New York City, a deeply symbolic "where" that became clear with the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.

Despite Spivak's self-professed concerns, first world intellectuals have taken up questions about her complicity in subaltern matters as a rallying point, suggesting that her work has been the subject of "misrecognition" because of "narrowly conceived... metropolitan concerns".[18] More recently, Spivak's foundational contribution to the discussion of subaltern matters has drawn attention to her identity as a "brown woman," which is a reworked neologism of a re-empowered "other".[19] Despite these intellectual reorientations, Spivak was caught between guilt at living in the first world while being a ventriloquist for the subaltern in the developing world. And while she never loses her brownness, her complex identity as a privileged female seeking to find a way to give voice to the voiceless and power to the misrepresented, is a commonplace dilemma for intellectuals in the west, or anywhere for that matter. She is always already giving voice through her presence in the center of power – New York. Questions around this contextual type of power are multifaceted. They cannot simply be replaced by a kind of default that suggests that "postcolonial dialogue" will improve postcolonial work by academics and governments.[20]The fact remains, claims to represent the subaltern are acts of ventriloquy.

What is a ventriloquist? Attempts at answers raise questions about representation and power, especially for the abject. Stuart Hall's notion of encoding and decoding television remains the most popular contribution to post-structuralist theory about representation. Hall suggested that the analysis of linguistic, cultural and social codes within the television text would allow ideological meanings to be "read" from the coded text and thereby offer an understanding of how ideology is constituted. The codes were to

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17. Spivak, Gyatri C. (1990) "The problem of Cultural Self-Representation, with Walter Adamson." In (Ed.) S. Harasym, Gyatri Chakravorty Spivak. The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, :50-58 (57).

18. Kaplan, Caren and Grewal, Inderpal (1999) "Transnational Feminist Cultural Studies: Beyond the Marxism/Poststructuralism/Feminism Divides." In (Eds) C. Kaplan, N. Alarć, M. Mooallam, Between Woman and Nation, Durham: Duke University Press: 347-363, 355-356.

19. Silva, Kumarini (2010) "Brown: From Identity to identification." Cultural Studies Vol. 24 (2): 167-182.

20. Duncan, Dawn (2002) "A Flexible Foundation: Constructing a Postcolonial Dialogue." In (Eds.) D.T. Goldberg and A. Quayson, Relocating Postcolonialism. Oxford: Blackwell: 320-333 (328).

be determined by recognizing the structures that reproduce the "dominant cultural order."[21] Such "order" always takes place within a social discourse in which "effective communicative exchange" emerges as a result of "misunderstandings" of hegemonic codes that in turn are combined with negotiated and opposed codes.[22] Previously, the assumption had been that interpretation involves the representation of a text for an audience by a producer and the culture industry apparatus: the dominant authority. Hall's model freed the audience from the hegemonic power of heavy handed single interpretations of semiotic codes by interpretative representatives. Contrary to the authority position, Hall argued that people (the audience) acted in their own interests in relation to the text, making ventriloquy unnecessary – a claim as it were, that "no one speaks for me."

Some critics have suggested that Hall emphasized a somewhat static reading of codes. Rather than something approximating a post-modern one, or multireferential ones, his original insight about hegemonic codes stands because ideology is inherent in all artifacts and manifests itself, whether we like it or not in struggles over and about meaning.[23] The critical insight in Hall's model for my purposes is the way it suggests that representation is a type of ventriloquy (a displacement reading) where "the other" is replaced by a colonial authority, a spokesperson, a ventriloquist.

Ventriloquy has been infrequently referred to in the subaltern literature, suggesting that it has been difficult for cultural critics to do one of two things: avoid a first world predilection for speaking for a lost class fragment or audience; or struggling to acknowledge then dispose of, the representational authority that is claimed over "the other."[24] In both cases concern has emerged about how to avoid being complicit in representing the other and taking into consideration matters that are "evocative, moral, critical, and rooted in local understandings."[25] Edward Said initially propagated a direct view of the other in *Orientalism*, suggesting that representation among colonized people was the key challenge in understanding them. Later in life, Said sought to clarify what he had meant in terms of a discourse, rather than a single form of colonial domination through

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21. Hall, Stuart (1980) "Encoding/Decoding." In Eds. D. Hobson, A, Lowe and P. Willis, Culture, Media, Language. London: Hutchinson: 166-176 (172).

22. Hall, Stuart (1980) "Encoding/Decoding." In Eds. D. Hobson, A, Lowe and P. Willis, Culture, Media, Language, London: Hutchinson: 166-176 (173 and 175).

23. Pillai, Poonan (1991) "Rereading Stuart Hall's Encoding Decoding Model." Communication Theory, Vol. 2 (3): 221-233.

24. Denizen, Norman and Lincoln, Yvonne (2000) "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage: 1-31.

25. Denizen, Norman and Lincoln, Yvonna (2000) "Introduction: The discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage: 1-31 (3).

representation.[26] The fact remains that hybrid first world intellectuals (foreign born academics from the developing world living in the advanced west – the most difficult speaking position of all) like Spivak, Hall and Said, and operating in the pre-Internet era, can be seen to have been complicit in their efforts to speak for and represent the other through ventriloquy – even when this was unintended.

Academics in Subaltern Studies have tried to extricate themselves from the complicity factor that describes their position as post-colonial ventriloquists.[27] Foremost among these has been the emergence of "self-critical awareness of the problem" of writing history "from the bottom up," as Dipesh Chakrabarty put it.[28] And while the marginalized and socially subordinate subaltern would no doubt appreciate this rise in first world consciousness, the new importance of the subaltern is to be found in their relation to the Internet which offers them another way of speaking, a way of self-representation, thereby taking Hall's concept to its conclusion by refusing western culture industries hegemonic ideological structures of operation. Self-representation can then be viewed as the refusal by the subaltern to accept their stasis within the global class system and as such is part of what John Beverley identified as the type of subject that "interrupts" the first and dominant world narrative by breaking the sutures that have kept it in place.[29]

Interrupting narratives by breaking into them with the image of sutures as Beverley does, suggests that the subaltern have been constrained by some kind of surgeon whose mysterious work no longer applies. Indeed, they *had* been stitched-up! They *had* been put in their place by a force greater than they could imagine or overcome. Following the emergence of post post-colonial interruption (to paraphrase Beverley), some discussion in subaltern studies has been about the continuing speechlessness of the subaltern and how they could be represented in an effort to continue to reproduce colonial relationships by pronunciation – the utterance as a claim of ownership through ventriloquy. As recently as 2007, a conference titled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" cited *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000) by Sarah Ahmed, as a starting point for discussion.

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26. Said, Edward (2002) "Said, Edward in Conversation with Neeladri Bhattacharya, Suvir Kaul, Anita Loomba." In (Eds) D.T. Goldberg and A. Quayson, Relocating Postcolonialism. Oxford: Blackwell: 1-14.

27. Said, Edward (1991) "The Politics of Knowledge," Raritan, Vol. XI, No. 1. Republished in (Ed) P. Berman, Debating PC, New York: Delta Books: 172- 198 (175).

28. Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000) Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 102.

29. Beverley, John (2001) "The Impossibility of Politics: Subalternity, Modernity, Hegemony." In (Ed) I. Rodriguez, The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader. Durham: Duke University Press: 47-63 (50).

> What I am calling for, against either universalism or cultural relativism, is politics that is premised on closed encounters, on encounters with those who are other than "the other" or "the stranger"... Such a politics is based on encounters between other others is one bound up with responsibility – with recognizing that (labouring) *sic* relations between others are always constitutive of either speaking or not speaking ...It is the work that needs to be done to get closer to others in a way that does not appropriate the labour as "my labour", or their talk as my talk, that makes possible a different form of collective politics. (no page number).[30]

The key words in this statement are those that reflect leadership by the intellectual who recognizes a responsibility to get close to "the other," even while acknowledging that such an act is no longer productive. Against this type of second guessing about what is good for the subaltern, is the prospect of a subaltern which has no interest in encounter, of concepts of responsibility or collective politics: those who are abject. This subaltern is only interested in the opportunity to live, to eat and to survive and is beyond the contemporary imagination of the subaltern scholar. In light of this kind of assertiveness, there has been a shift in how "representation" of the subaltern takes place. His and her labor is entirely their own,[31] so that the question: "Is there a space within it (the Internet) for the subaltern?" no longer has the currency it may have once enjoyed.[32] New intellectual and cultural formations have emerged in the post-colonial era that make it possible to acknowledge the reconstruction of subaltern power without ventriloquy or representation from an outside source. Nowhere is this more feasible than through the Internet, although the Internet itself cannot be mythologized as a tool, without there first being an end to ventriloquy. In fact, as I suggest in the chapter on jihad, increasingly, self-determination is asserted by those who do speak, whether we want to hear them or not.

Surely the fact remains that those we least want to hear are abject. What makes the abject especially noteworthy is that the definition of what the abject has been has changed through the influence of the Internet. The ventriloquists have left the building, making the speech and associated communicative acts of the abject direct and unstable, perhaps even unknowable within the rational logic of western modes of thought. Internet communication operates through a hybridized model of unstable categories that shift with differing contexts and alternative ideological systems of meaning making where pre-existing categories no longer describe the abject experience through the lens of "the other." In fact, the category of otherness is itself

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30. URL accessed 2 July 2008, http://www.allconferences.com/conferences/2007/20071017232839/

31. Writing from a different position to the one proposed in this book, Antonio Gramsci suggested that the subaltern was part of civil society and would achieve statehood when it engaged in autonomous formation of its own class consciousness.

32. Nakamura, Lisa (2002) Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet. New York, Routledge: 16.

jettisoned as a western and colonial construct by those who speak directly within the Internet.

In this Internet empowered scenario, no one bothers with first world guilt, representation, sutures or subordination. Rather, this subaltern announces itself with the Internet. As Chakrabarty noted, the movement from the bottom up is an emergence from such depths that it is a shift in keeping with proletarianization – yet even further. The subaltern can speak while the abject break through to speak. The ventriloquists can retire. Both the subaltern and the abject speak through the digital network as two separate categories of experience. One speaks within capital and one outside of if. There is nowhere below the status of the subaltern except annihilation for the abject. For its part, discussion about representation is now a faux debate, because the subaltern arises from the no space of the abject through proletarianization to a space in contemporary capitalism while the abject annihilate that space. They both operate within the "spatial totality" of Empire which, as Hardt and Negri argued is constituted by the porous boundaries of technology within globalization.[33] Of course, this space may be bereft of civility, affection, love or even hope as conceived by the west (or Hardt and Negri for that matter), yet this space has a direct relationship with contemporary communications and the opportunities offered therein. Internet empowerment creates a proletarian possibility, even as it presents the abject without ventriloquy.

What I am describing is a model of subalternization and the abject within proletarianization. There are three parts to it:

the subaltern within the global system;

the ventriloquist who had sought to represent "the other;"

the abject who cannot move into capital through the Internet, yet experience it through the Internet and express this experience through that very same technology.

This is a complex and dynamic set of relationships.

Prevailing subaltern perspectives construct the subaltern as hopefully proletarian. That version of subaltern theory applies a style of class determinism which cannot adequately address the reality of the situation: the abject are present and their presence marks a negation of class assumptions about the subaltern. So while at one level the Internet offers movement into a relationship with capital, at the level of the everyday it refuses entry: a continuation of being abject. This is where the negation theory of value explains the double contradiction: the subaltern move into the market while the abject are refused or cannot move at all. Material life for both the subaltern and the abject is real. Rather than being a category relegated to a representational space in cyberspace, both the subaltern and the abject are part of the global system of meaning and are present within it. They are symbolic and material at the same time. They are connected, as Nancy Fraser's

33. Negri, Antonio, Hardt, Michael (2000) Empire. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: xiv.

notion of the "subaltern counterpublics" suggests and they have an active class identity.[34] But the abject are not a counterpublic in the way Fraser suggests, operating to expand the public sphere by withdrawing, regrouping, and agitating within a rationally conceived space.[35] Neither is the abject able to be managed by characterizing its utilization of the Internet as "destabilization."[36] As I discuss in the next chapter the claims to rationality driving both Fraser's and Dahlgren's ideas are built around Enlightenment concepts of public space and political life. This logic is challenged by the abject on the Internet. The Internet delivers a type of irrationality that blocks assumptions about the movement around rationally conceived spaces.

My model of the abject runs counter to the prevailing reflex within Internet and digital technology analysis, because the prevailing model is fundamentally blind to the abject and the communication technologies to which the abject now have access. The dominant view as I suggested earlier, is that of perpetual upward social and economic advancement within the growth model of capitalism. The abject cannot realize this ambition. Instead, the abject is locked out of the process yet has access to the tools of its own negation.

An example of this limitation can be found in a recent evaluation of pirates which indicate how language reproduces the categories of discourse around established ideas of morality as a rational category:

> The propertied targets of piratical theft are quick to view pirates as criminal actors outside the bounds of civilized behavior, but the dispossessed are inclined to take a more nuanced approach that admires the defiance of the pirates at the same time as it fears their violence.[37]

When observed through the moral lens of right and wrong according to the dominant standards of social relations, the limitations of this statement are clear. At best, the reference here to "the dispossessed," is a judgment incorporating redundant standards of rational civility that are irrelevant to the abject (who in some cases may be pirates). For the abject, there is no "nuance" of moral suasion, because the moral standards that determine value are to them statements of colonizing logic. In other words, the abject are

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34. Fraser, Nancy (1992) "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In (Ed) C. Calhoun, Habermas and the Public Sphere, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press: 109-142 (122).

35. Fraser, Nancy (1992) "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In (Ed) C. Calhoun, Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, MA:, MIT Press: 109-142 (124).

36. Dahlgren, Peter (2005) "The Internet, Public Spheres and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation." Political Communication, Vol. 22, Issue 2: 147-162.

37. Opiz, Andrew (2009) "Editorial notes: Pirates and piracy – material realities an cultural myths." dark matter, (5, 20 December). URL accessed 22 January 2010 at http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2009/12/20/editorial-notes-pirates-and-piracy-material-realities-and-cultural-myths/

beyond both the logic and knowledge of proletarianization. This is not to say the abject are without knowledge: the Internet makes the circulation of knowledge about their condition clear to them and to those "outside."

Another example of the way Internet analysis has been unable to address the abject appears in Lisa Nakamura's *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity and Identity on the Internet*. Nakamura uses "cosmetic cosmopolitanism" to describe the US mass media's program to "conceal the problem of racism in the American context."[38] Nakamura's approach suggests the academic habit of wanting to claim naming rights such as "cosmetic cosmopolitanism," when the evidence suggests the contrary. (We are all guilty as charged). Certainly the Internet bubble of 1996 - 2002 which is Nakamura's concern, suggested economic excesses around the Internet "boom," but "cosmetic cosmopolitanism" becomes a trope for what cannot be stated – the frequent impossibility of breaking the barrier of entry for US minorities into the class system. To add to the challenges of "cosmetic cosmopolitanism," Nakamura's perspective is viewed through the limiting lens of cyberculture. Such a concept when tied to the globalized Internet suggests a commitment to representation that is no longer salient, as I suggested above. Similarly, claims made against racist representations on the Internet do not address abject social formation and the process of proletarianization.

Moral economy redux

It is crucial to recognize that the abject are going nowhere while it is equally crucial to understand the potentiality within proletarianization. In its relationship with the subaltern the abject is static, yet it is present, observed and experienced in and through proletarianization. Proletarianization without the dynamic of its mobility would be like describing a dead object using metaphors taken from the living. It cannot be done because it cannot be comprehended.

Moral economy is an effective model for doing this because it identifies changes in the political economy of populations within a dramatically changing technological landscape. It is, as Colin Barker suggested, "not ... a carefully articulated theoretical system. Rather it has the character of a loosely coupled and dynamic ensemble of ideas and evocative symbols, developed in opposition to ruling ideas."[39] The postindustrial world, digital communications and postmodern culture is dynamic, just as the changes brought about by steam power and the money economy was dynamic as industrialization brought vast numbers of people to English cities in the seventeenth century. Admittedly, the recent changes have occurred on an entirely different scale

38. Nakamura, Lisa (2002) Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet. New York: Routledge: 14.

39. Barker, Colin (2006) "Ideology, Discourse and Moral Economy: Consulting the People of North Manchester." Atlantic Journal of Communication, 14 (1&2): 7-17 (21).

because the Internet's global characteristics bring everyone into a relationship with capital, creating a mode of development that makes conventional development theories obsolete. Furthermore, the fragmentation of markets and audiences within postmodernity suggests intensified diffusion due to the Internet's influence on globalization. The universalizing force of the Internet makes it clear that the entire planet coexists within the digital moral economy, while massively differentiated groups of actors consolidate in communities, including those experiencing the stasis of the abject. Against this absence of movement is the dynamism of proletarianization. This is an advance on Manuel Castells's theory of information networking, which he argued has determined transformations in social structure and social morphology.[40]

As I noted above, subalternization operates within the digital moral economy to remake social and economic relationships, while the abject are constrained from participation in the economy, even while they are subjected to it and offered its contradictory features: inducements to consumerism, western models of liberal democracy and violent systems of administrative control such as pilotless drones which operate as bombing devices remotely controlled from continental US control stations. These converged, contradictory digital forces need little elaboration as a schizophrenic turn. As these examples suggest, the digital moral economy does not offer bread riots in the face of food shortages, as documented by E. P. Thompson. Rather, for the abject, everyday conditions incorporate them into the Internet imaginary, but exclude them from its beneficence.

Earlier ideas along these lines have been suggested by Neil Larsen, who noted how neo-liberalism had created "the truly 'wretched of the earth'" (in Fanon's sense), producing "retrogression" away from promised social and economic development, as "vast new migrations of unutilizable 'human capital' pour out of these regions towards the shrinking bases of accumulating wealth," to cities that are increasingly populated by masses of the abject.[41]Within the expanding metropolis, the "unexploitable" are those who, as Robert Kurz has said "have fallen entirely out of the market and become permanently superfluous."[42]

This theory of the abject offers a contrast with the limitations of liberal ambitions for the Internet. Take for example Peter Golding's suggestion about key issues in the development of the digital infrastructure: "In the [future] Information Society, we can either allow the technology to drive the changes forward in a haphazard and incoherent fashion, or we can choose to

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40.Castells, Manuel (2000) "Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society." British Journal of Sociology. Vol. 51, No. 1 (January/March): 5-24.

41. Larsen, Neil (2001) Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas, London: Verso: 25.

42.Neil Larsen (2001) Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas. London: Verso: 73. Larsen, Neil (2010) Email correspondence with the author March 30.

shape them for the benefit of our community as a whole."[43] This perspective is no longer applicable, if indeed it ever was. "Our community" now includes the abject and it cannot be excluded as if by Information Society fiat. Furthermore, the discussion of the abject incorporates a critique of mainstream assumptions about the Internet through the lens of transgressive knowledge. The prevalence of global networks and the abject's place within and below proletarianization suggest the limitations of the normative ideals of conventional sociology and a lot of cultural studies and political economy. Such normative approaches are a mere shadow of the abject's everyday experience where normative ambitions sustain the continuation of status quo expectations for development. What is required is the continual reinvention of ways to think about the Internet that are not limited by established world views. Such a reinvention has yet to centrally reconfigure the abject within changing world views.

In taking this approach it is important not to mistake the relationship of the abject with the Internet for a new form of institutional power. Such a reading fundamentally misunderstands the abject. The Internet gives direct access to the abject, yet in mistakenly reading this relationship through an advanced western frame, it can be as if the solution to the abject is to establish a development path that matches or is identical to that of the west. This is the point of Kurz and Larsen's "unexploitable." A considerable amount of energy goes into human development programs that are committed to expanding opportunities for the subaltern, while the abject continue to be trapped below the system of proletarianization, even while they are revealed by it. Entire westernized bureaucracies exist to develop and support human development. Almost every country in the world has one, which tend to revolve in a galaxy around the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These human development programs do little to resolve the structural issues that keep the abject where they are. In other words, there are no guarantees that development will move towards the just distribution of the earth's resources: that struggle must be fought on an everyday level even while the Internet has made that project both moot and full of potential for challenge.[44] As I noted above, what defines the abject is the process of proletarianization which coexists with the absence of mechanisms to move into a relationship with capital and the institutions of the state. Nevertheless, the Internet's availability to the abject determines entirely new considerations of power through presence.

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43. Golding, Peter (2000) "Forthcoming Features: Information and Communications Technologies and the Sociology of the Future." Sociology, 34 (1): 165–184. [Cambridge University press journals on-line]

44. Schor, Juliet (2010) Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth. New York: Penguin.

My argument is that a change in orientation towards human development concepts is needed that goes hand in hand with the rise of the Internet and the abject. There are new structures of meaning that will not and are not being addressed by development programs because a new set of ideas exists within the abject about its own location in relation to capital and history. These are ideas about self management, anti-capitalist, anti-state, negative views that can be seen as irrational and parochial. They are described by the immediacy of the Internet and reflect the transgressive knowledge that is in global circulation. These ideas are not unified in any global sense. As I suggest later in this book, the shift from Enlightenment and Kantian rationality to irrationality describes the location of the abject within the culture. This shift explains their actions as opponents, wittingly and unwittingly, of post-colonial and post-Marxist politics.[45] The formerly colonized are newly empowered, and within that power is the abject with their perspectives, their politics and their refusal to allow previous systems of knowledge to settle unchallenged.

Visceral Energy

The "peculiar visceral intelligence" of the colonized, as Homi Bhabha suggested in writing an introduction to a re-edition of Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, has shifted to become the Internet's new dynamic of action.[46] In a remove from Fanon's idea of colonization, proletarianization does not operate to bring everyone within the ambit of capital, it actually pushes them away from capital, while pulling them towards it. The contradictory nature of the Internet does not allow the abject to disappear beneath the veneer of activity that reproduces either the status quo or the subaltern of capitalism. Rather the Internet connects us all with the knowledge and experience of the colonized abject that are everywhere and going nowhere. They express their knowledge using visceral energy with material force and consequences. Just as the history of the media has produced new knowledge that operates in the spaces in which human action takes place, so the Internet extends the continuum of our shared humanity – whether we like it or not. In other words, the abject are us: they are the self-annihilating suicide bombers, the trafficked women and children, the porn stars left for dead. The abject are the detritus of a system's careless celebration of its own reproduction. These and countless millions are no longer "the other," neither are they removed into the safe house of cyberculture. This then is what is offered by the fundamentally non-discriminatory, open architecture of the Internet: the truth of the abject.

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45. Achuthan, Asha (2009) "The Post-Colonial Marxist Shift in Response to Technology." URL accessed 22 January 2010 at http://www.cis-india.org/research/cis-raw/histories/rewiring/the-postcolonial-marxist-shift-in-response-to-technology

46. Bhabha, Homi, (2004) "Foreword: Framing Fanon," The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press: ix.

Chapter 6
Getting to Unbounded Irrationality

Irrationality

Historians who examine where and in what ways the pursuit of justice and equity has failed are the ones who admit, sometimes unwittingly, that transgressive knowledge is the key constitutent of proletarianization. Eric Hobsbawn was such an historian, with his focus on banditry and subaltern Europeans. His views evoke the culture that breaks through the Internet.

> Time and again, in studying the political behaviour (sic) of peasants in a state of oppression, we discover the practical value of stupidity and a refusal to accept any innovation: the great asset of peasants is that there are many things you simply can't make them do, and by and large no change in what suits a traditional peasant best. (But of course, let us not forget that many peasants don't just play at being dense, they really *are* dense.)[1]

For my purposes there is no better way to begin a discussion of rationality and its manifestations within and through the Internet than this keenly wrought perspective which brings to mind recent comments of Gayatri Spivak. In her work in India with the abject poor, she recounted how the children with whom she works were incapable of remembering information

1. Hobsbawm, Eric (1997) "On History from Below." In On History, New York: The New Press: 214.

from a school class meeting the day before.[2] There is, in other words, a cognitive chasm between the advanced world's idea of rationality as a form of learned and remembered knowledge, and what Hobsbawn suggests is the condition of the abject and the peasant. Indeed, there is a move away from understanding the rationality behind moral economy as argued by E.P. Thompson. In Thompson's case, the moral economy of the food rioters was based on a specific type of rationality where people rioted faced with food shortages due to industrialization's new social organization. Hobsbawm's approach runs counter to the rationality that E.P. Thompson suggested was at work in mobilizing food rioters. Hobsbawm is in no doubt about the absence of rationality among peasants. The point is that human action can be characterized in different ways when it is informed by differing standards of reason.

Hobsbawn says what much of respectable society and its researchers will not admit in public. That is, he identifies the peasant quality of "stupidity" as an asset. To do so demands a willful act of acknowledgement on the part of the historian and the analyst. To extend the analysis is to recognize that peasants are in fact "dense," which is an eminently old-fashioned British way of saying someone is cognitively incapable of decision making as well as unaware of knowledge, its acquisition or its use. To do that is to say that the peasant adopts a position of power outside of the assumptions of bourgeois practice. Hobsbawm was cosmopolitan in his sensibility and damned with praise those he studied, recognizing the role of peasants in their own troubled emancipation within the revolutionary histories of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe in general and China. It was an approach that Tony Judt strongly rejected.[3] Indeed, the ignorance of peasants is a common trope in comedic sketches, based on stereotypes in Jewish (and Irish) humor.

Consider the first stanza of a joke from *The Big Jewish Joke Book*:

> They say that when you tell a joke to a peasant they laugh three times – Once when you tell the joke, again when you explain it, and yet again when he understands it, for peasants love to laugh.[4]

As this joke suggests, Hobsbawm captured the peasant stereotype of behavior, where knowledge was beyond the dominant, learned notions of rationality. His description expands our understanding of the rationality of peasants within a dynamic set of possibilities. Importantly, his approach recognizes the challenge of defining rationality.

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2. Mcmillen, Liz (2007) The Education of Gayatri Spivak, September 14. The Chronicle of Higher Education, URL available at http://chronicle.com/article/The-Education-of-Gayatri-Sp/14782/ Also available at http://www.wretch.cc/blog/shihlun/25427515

3. Judt, Tony (2003) "The Last Romantic." The New York Review of Book: November 20.

4. Novak, William and Waldoks, Moshe (1981) The Big Jewish Joke Book. New York: Harper Perennial: 4.

> Sometimes the behaviour (sic) was rational under some circumstances, but is no longer rational under changed circumstances. But there are also plenty of kinds of behaviour which are not rational at all, in the sense that they are effective means of achieving definable practical ends, but are merely comprehensible. This is obviously the case with the revival of beliefs in astrology, witchcraft, various fringe religious and irrational beliefs in the West today, or with certain forms of violent behaviour, such as – to take the most common example – the madness which seizes so many people once they get into a car.[5]

Hobsbawm's view of rationality is deeply nuanced. His account of what could be considered "stupid rationality" is respectfully presented because he does not want to discount the multiple possibilities of human behavior that achieve "definable practical ends." For Hobsbawm, no human behavior that is measured as "achieving definable practical ends" can be excluded from the potential permutations of human behavior, even while many of those ends do not reach the standard of reasonableness. This is the point at which the stupidity of dense peasants is for my purposes at least, conflated with the abject in the Internet era. I consider both categories - peasants and the abject - as interchangeable in the field of rationality (I am conflating for convenience, not to irritate anthropologists, sociologists and post-colonial scholars).

By opening up the concept of rationality as an analytical gambit in this chapter, I want to explore the way ideas about rationality have been part of dominant western liberal thought and how the Internet challenges this world view. In approaching the topic this way I do not offer a comprehensive analysis of rationality. Rather, I combine cultural studies and post-modern techniques of bricolage to draw attention to my analysis of the Internet. My goal in this chapter is to highlight various shifts in the orientation to rationality to illustrate how the Internet can be seen as a powerful vehicle for invoking new understandings of concepts around reason, rationality, irrationality, maturity and immaturity and therefore, redefine the relationship between individual and collective interests, as originally conceived within western culture, especially in the era known as the Enlightenment.

Given this, I look at rationality from the perspective of select Enlightenment ideals, reviewing some of Immanuel Kant's ideas about reason through the lens of the perspective offered by Michel Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment," then examine the rise of concepts around an influential idea from economics, namely "bounded rationality" which can throw light on what I call "unbounded irrationality," which is a phenomenon the Internet has provoked. In redirecting my interest back to the specifics of the Internet, I suggest that these changes in modes of thought and behavior have been mobilized through the individualism that is inherent in the Internet. How notions of the self-actualizing individual have been articulated to a culture of privatism in the context of the Internet explains the disarticulation of Enlightenment ideals from public discourse and civil

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5. Hobsbawm, Eric (1997) "On History from Below." In On History, New York: The New Press: 214.

society, allowing new meaning makings to emerge. In other words, what I do is examine the way rationality claims become part of "the indefatigable self-destructiveness of enlightenment."[6]

Enlightenment as Cultural Default

While it may be fair to suggest that the Enlightenment is little more than a blimp on the horizon of contemporary intellectual history, it is the touchstone for the idea to which this book keeps returning: rational systems of thought are challenged by newly irrational formations that appear on and are mobilized by the Internet. This is to say that the Internet operates at a different level as a communication tool from what previously existed. It is, as many authors have suggested, a "techno-social phenomena" that determines and reflects behavior through its real and virtual role as a structurating mechanism.[7] It operates in both a technological and a social sense simultaneously, combining emancipatory potential with new forms of power and domination.[8] This literature - of which there is an increasing volume struggling over what Christian Fuchs described as the "problematic theoretical-ideological" implications - is engaged in defining and giving meaning to the Internet, because Enlightenment values are presented in stark relief by the technology of the network and the postmodern variety of the content it transports.[9] As I noted in the previous chapter, the circulation of ideas that reflect "the abject," challenge assumptions about media and communication itself by reinventing the theoretical and practical limits of civil society. At the same time material challenges to liberal ideals for civil society are embodied in action, as Internet pornography suggests and as various jihadist mobilizations have shown.

Looking at some historical landmarks from the Enlightenment provides an understanding of how the social standards that emerged around that time are thrown into relief by the Internet and in so doing mark more clearly the emergence of proletarianization. Of course, it would be easy to say that the concept of rationality that has been associated with the Enlightenment has moved through so many iterations in the years since Francis Bacon died in 1626 that it does not need discussion. However, in invoking Bacon as a "founder," it is possible to see in his work a burst of optimism that helped determine Enlightenment beliefs in the positive meaning of technologic-

6. Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max (1997/1944) Dialectic of Enlightenment. London: Verso Press: xi.

7. Fuchs, Christian (2009) "Some Reflections on Manuel Castell's Book, "Communication Power." TripleC, (1) 94-108. URL accessed March 16, 2010 at http://www.triple-c.at

8. Castells, Manuel, (2000) The Rise of the Network Society. Malden, MA.: Blackwell.

9. Fuchs, Christian (2009) "Some Reflections on Manuel Castell's Book "Communication Power," TripleC, (1) 94-108: 95 URL accessed June 18, 2010 at http://www.triple-c.at

al change. Bacon argued that technology had inherent goodness while any misuse was accidental. In fact, the Enlightenment's rational ways of seeing the state of things started with Bacon's idea that printing, gunpowder and the compass did more to benefit humanity than philosophical debates and political reforms, thereby arguing "for an all out affirmation of technology in general."[10]

This affirmation of technological invention unhinged human ambition from the legal and structural traditions of feudalism as endorsed and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. Technological invention generated, as it were, dramatic ideas about new social order: the discovery of gunpowder made almost everyone in the old feudal order rethink old structures. The unhinging began in earnest with the Renaissance and continued more powerfully with Martin Luther's Reformation, despite debates among historians that seek to thread the needle on the precise dates of one or other movement. The optimism of Enlightenment ideals was famously incorporated into thinking about change when Fredrick Engels penned the Introduction to Marx's *Anti-Duhring*. The palpable claim of optimism in Enlightenment rationality is conveyed in Engels comments:

> The great men, who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognized no external authority of any kind whatever. Religion, natural science, society, political institutions – everything was subject to the most unsparing criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgment-seat of reason or give up existence. ...[11]

By linking reason to revolution, Engels was endorsing the Hegelian idea of the mind finding truth by turning everything on its head, or upside down. However, Hegel's optimism turned soon enough to critique, as history unfolded.

> Every form of society then existing, every old traditional notion was flung into the lumber-room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudices; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. Now, for the first time, appeared the light of day (the kingdom of reason); henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal Right, equality based on nature and the inalienable rights of man. We know that this kingdom was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realization in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law...[12]

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10. Mitcham, Carl (1994) Thinking Through Technology: The Path between Engineering and Philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 284-285. .

11. Engels, Fredrick, Introduction to the Anti-Duhring, in On Literature and Art: Marx Engels. Moscow, Progress Publishers 1976: 271.

12. Engels, Fredrick, Introduction to the Anti-Duhring, in On Literature and Art: Marx Engels. Moscow, Progress Publishers 1976: 271.

From the higher reaches of the ideals embodied in rationality to the depths of the capture of reason by the bourgeoisie, the utopian Enlightenment model is adumbrated by the countervailing force. The optimism of rationality is reduced to a set of rights and laws which continue to direct civil society and everyday life. The transition from the "unsparing criticism" as an ideal of reason to the rapid emergence of bourgeois codes and structures is the important aspect of the narrative. There is a deflated sense of optimism in this telling that serves as the foundation of a discussion about rationality.

The changes and the disappointments in the rise of bourgeois rationality since the Enlightenment make concrete the navigation of the divergent paths of reason and nonreason. This is the trajectory of human history. In fact, scholars of the Enlightenment have engaged in a "repeated reinvention" of its ideals which, according to Daniel Brewer, incorporated the rise of "progress, liberalism and republicanism," at least in its nineteenth century French manifestations.[13] Still today, an Enlightenment moment operates as the touchstone for civilization, as a kind of call to reasonableness through active knowledge acquisition, with its own inherent ideals. For example, the European communication scholar Cees Hamelink suggested that:

> In a modern world that is largely inspired by the Enlightenment ideals of human improvement through science and technology...The holy mantra of our era seems to be that knowledge in itself is good and that acquiring more knowledge is even better. And indeed, the search for knowledge satisfies a fundamental human desire to "fly away from ignorance" as William Shakespeare elegantly put it.[14]

This continued "moment" operates in such a way that reason and rationality are established as the standards for evaluating human progress. Reason and rationality are the cultural default positions to which generations of Enlightenment people have deferred, regardless of the imprecision of the terms. An interest in knowledge has been assumed to be enough to cover the alternative, the morally dubious category of "ignorance." It became a kind of short hand, whereby it seemed possible to claim certainty and thus decency. That situation is now changing. The Internet has prompted the reinvention, or even the dismissal of the categories of reason and rationality, offering proletarianization, which is not bound by Enlightenment concepts of rationality or knowledge.

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13. Brewer, Daniel (2008) The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth Century French Thought. New York: Cambridge University Press: 158. Reviewed by Daniel Rosenberg, American Historical Review, June 2009: 711-712.

14. Hamelink, Cees (2008) "Conversations with my Robot." Nordicom Review, Vol. 30, June: 219-223, (222).

Kant and Enlightenment

When Immanuel Kant published the essay "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in 1784, he was already deeply embedded in his quest for a full scale theory of reason.[15] His work came after the original Enlightenment as "defined" by Francis Bacon as a mixture of empiricism, science and experiential knowledge. Bacon died 158 years before Kant's work was published.[16] Kant's essay on Enlightenment indicated a shift in the political organization of Europe within modernism. In fact, Kant's relationship to his benefactor, the Prussian King Frederick the Great was notable because his discussion of maturity subtly foregrounds his admiration for Frederick. Leaving aside the political issues around Frederick is not to leave aside the way Kant's core ideas about rationality were bound to his observation of everyday life in Frederick's kingdom, where Fredrick provided a sense of security and well being for his Prussian citizens. Kant was concerned to extend his philosophical investigation of a long standing challenge to classical philosophy, that is, how the rise of individualism can be understood within the collective interests of Prussian unity. The resonance of Kant's investigation with institutional economics is notable because it points to the ongoing theme of the social dilemma facing the individual within the collective, outlined by John Commons in his 1931 essay "Institutional Economics," which I discuss in detail in the next chapter.

Kant's essay on maturity was an attempt to explain the contradictory nature of reason in a closely regulated society. It is hardly surprising that Kant identified the intellectual challenge of balancing independent decision making against the role of the citizen's function within the community. The combination of a logic that sees the "unification of people's collective will" with the King's will results from a shared determination to achieve "complete freedom."[17] Such an approach could be construed as fascist style, but Kant was more subtle than that. He believed that "when things are considered in broad perspective, a strange, unexpected pattern in human affairs reveals itself, one in which almost everything is paradoxical." The paradox is that individual maturity becomes freedom when it is claimed within the King's kingdom. This individualism acts to "prevent anyone from forcibly interfering with another's working" and "leave everyone free to use his own reason in all matters of conscience."

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15. Kant, Immanuel (1784) "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" Accessed 10 November 2009, URL available at http://www.engligh.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html

16. Gaukroger, Stephen (2001) Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early Modern Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

17. Kant, As Above: All the quotes are from the web-based document, which is not paginated.

All this could be so much empty posturing in support of the King if Kant's overall objective was not understood. The goal was to "expand knowledge" within a model that is best described as the process of maturity. His ideal reinforces the human quest for freedom which moves on an expansionary trajectory through a field of knowledge acquisition. What was necessary for Kant's model to succeed was the continued process of acquiring knowledge. As I noted above, this process is viewed in the contemporary sense by Cees Hamelink as the ongoing "moment" of the Enlightenment. For Kant, to be mature is to be engaged in a lifelong commitment to "carefully considered and well-intentioned thoughts." This is a process-driven system of Enlightenment.

Michel Foucault argued in his essay "What is Enlightenment?" that Kant was *not* endorsing a "process" of becoming knowledgeable and thus mature.[18] Instead claimed Foucault, Kant was superimposing "the universal, the free and the public" uses of reason on each other. In unpacking these layers of reason, Foucault interpreted Kant's text to suggest that immaturity is when "a certain state of our will ... makes us accept someone else's authority to lead us in areas where the state of reason is called for."[19] Ultimately, and contrary to what Foucault suggested, this does describe a process characterized as a shift in consciousness, based on reason. It occurs by recognizing an absence of knowledge and then acting to acquire it. The knowledge is not universal so much as the commitment to engaging with the process of its acquisition. This is why Kant says the nature of the process is paradoxical – it is in the act of responding to contingencies that knowledge is acquired. To not engage with the process is immature. The maturity, the enlightenment, will take whatever form is best suited to the contingency; contrary to Foucault, it may not be universal even when that is the ideal. However, particular outcomes of the Enlightenment are universal and they are acquired within a structured system of meaning making. In other words, there is an established set of universals just as there is a process that the individual undertakes to acquire them. It's a Tweedledum and Tweedledee approach to maturity: there is individual subservience to the collective, but improvement happens only when the individual is mature enough to step outside of the collective to recognize how to apply the universal values of the community to the self.

Foucault alerts readers to the way Kant's concept of immaturity points to individualism as the lens through which to view universal Enlightenment ideals. The Kantian realization of individuality happens by engaging with the process of universal standards of knowledge acquisition. In so doing, there are principles of maturity that the individual acquires. They are those things that a man "ought to know," as Kant put it. These are the standards of maturity, of reason, of knowledge that establish "public order" and "har-

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18. Foucault, Michel (1994) "What is Enlightenment?" In Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth, (Ed) P. Rabinow. New York: The New Press: 303-319 (305).

19. Foucault, Michel (1994) "What is Enlightenment": 307.

mony," instead of "barbarism." These are the universal values of the Enlightenment which have been codified as standards, or as Engels suggested "rights."

In this configuration, knowledge is acquired then codified in bourgeois law. The point Engels made was that these standards, Foucault's universals, undermined the process that Kant invoked, because while they establish codes of law, Rights, equality and justice, these universals discount the individual who engages in knowledge acquisition. Considerable effort has been expended on exploring the philosophical dilemma of individual contingency amidst universals, which I will consider later in relation to John Rawls work. Bart Vandenabeele pointed in this direction with his suggestion "That human life-practices are similar is no ground to suppose that there is no essential or prototypical "Way of Life" that they share."[20] The open ended nature of the unraveling of universals requires an active commitment to a processual way of conceiving life in the contemporary world, where the individual is always caught up in the act of negotiating the universals. The question is at what point do the boundaries of the universals give way to barbarism?

The model I am suggesting consists of a hardening of boundaries around the process of knowledge acquisition and the universal ideals of maturity. As I noted in the previous chapter, these boundaries have kept the abject out of the coded Enlightenment world of knowledge. In fact, their knowledge would be defined in Kantian terms as barbarism. For those who do not live within the mature world of Enlightenment codes, there are no boundaries. Enlightenment values are irrelevant, so that where the Internet breaks Enlightenment boundaries, the concept of boundaries itself is irrelevant. New communication technologies have always offered this prospect, bringing popular culture, working class culture, the subaltern and the abject into the gaze of the bourgeois public and their codes. This is why moral panics accompany every recent new media event - since rock and roll and the gramophone. The knowledge that Kant said would emerge to define maturity is no longer structured within the confines of universals. Rather, the unregulated Internet offers emancipation from universals, even though the universals continue to exist as the standard against which life is measured.

Immaturity then, is a state where it is possible *not* to be bothered by universal standards. These standards have been established as Enlightenment ideals which are managed by bourgeois institutions. As I note when discussing public policy, in the US the focus on "the public interest" as the standard by which to measure acceptable interactions is thoroughly fungible, open to the changing landscape of social life, but bounded. But there's a sea of possibilities that offer themselves in contrast to universal ideals. This is why political economy needs to be front and centre of the analysis of immaturity, because it asserts the processual nature of the contingen-

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20. Vendenabeele, Bart (2004) "New Media, Art, and International Communication." The Journal of Aesthetic Education, Vol. 38, No 4, 1-9: 3.

cies. Perhaps the most telling example of contemporary liberal philosophy that illustrates the struggle with this matter was the work of Harvard philosopher John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice*.[21] This quintessentially American pragmatist offered a "social contract account of justice," where at every turn in the moral universe the concept of justice is counteracted by "the veil of ignorance."[22] This "veil" is little more than a rendering of the immaturity that makes it impossible to reach an acceptable level (for Rawls at least) of justice. The circuit of negotiation about justice involves laying out the rational processes of morality. The people who do this are free and equal and outside the veil, and offer a range of choices.

> The parties in the original position are presented with a list of the main conceptions of justice drawn from the tradition of social and political philosophy, and are assigned the task of choosing from among these alternatives the conception of justice that best advances their interests in establishing conditions that enable them to effectively pursue their final ends and fundamental interests.[23]

Seen against the Kantian notion of maturity as a set of universal standards applied by the individual in the community and the hardening of those standards in bourgeois systems of administration, Rawls approach looks like the embodiment of a fanciful justice system imposed from above. Later, he referred to the system of "public reason" as something that belonged to "a well ordered constitutional democratic society."[24] Here, "the dominant and controlling citizens affirm and act from irreconcilable yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines."[25] Its fatal flaw is the inability to incorporate the kind of analysis that cultural studies offers, to see highly differentiated forms of power as the determining feature of justice while justice itself is constituted within political action.[26] In fact, Rawls provided a foundation for empowered indeterminancy, where, in the pursuit of justice "easily applied principles of rational choice do not specify the best plan; a great deal

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21. Rawls, John (1971 / 2005) A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Ma.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

22. Rawls, John (1996) "Original Position," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Accessed March 14, 2010, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/

23. Rawls, John (1996) "Original Position," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Accessed March 14, 2010, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/original-position/

24. Rawls, John, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," The University of Chicago Law Review. Vol. 64, No. 3": 765 – 807 (765).

25. Rawls, John (1997) "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," The University of Chicago Law Review. Vol. 64, No. 3: 765 – 807 (807).

26. Ang, Ien and Stratton, John (1996) "On the impossibility of a global cultural studies: 'British' cultural studies in an 'international' frame." In (Ed) D. Morley and K-H Chen, Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies. New York: Routledge: 361-391.

remains to be decided."[27] Consequently, the rational pursuit of justice takes on an increasingly anachronistic appearance in the face of the immediacy of choices the individual can make in contemporary society.

The Rawls example illustrates how difficult it is to move to an understanding of maturity when the structures of meaning are constrained by limited models of taken-for-granted justice which turn like slow grinding wheels that require the kind of patience only time born of privilege can bring. My argument is that reconceiving maturity in the light of the Internet draws out the absurdity of claims to justice such as those proffered by Rawls and liberal pragmatists, and in many continuing debates.[28] The veil of ignorance cannot be lifted simply by getting highly motivated advocates of justice in a room to agree on traditions of justice. Contrary to traditions of rationality and its application to justice, Rawls's veil has been torn apart, replaced with immaturity, which is the easier option for making individual decisions. An uncompromising criticism of the claim to be able to negotiate justice (and universals) from a privileged position, is drawn from "a kind of stock of superannuated clichés."[29] It is worth recalling that Michel Foucault wished he had known the work of the Frankfurt School sooner in his career: which is a way of saying that Foucault's enthusiasm for knowledge as the foundation of his discourse about cultural change through power would have been more critically informed by an understanding of Kant's original notion of the paradoxical.[30]

Immaturity offers a way of conceiving of Enlightenment ideas about reason. It establishes a shorthand model which identifies the boundaries of rationality that are contested by new and emerging types of knowledge. The point is that beyond Enlightenment boundaries, the abject operate with no knowledge except their own. As Hobsbawm pointed out with reference to peasants, the value of this knowledge has "definable practical ends," which is difficult to see, even comprehend from the perspective of an Enlightenment framework of universals. This is why Enlightenment claims are readily offered as solutions to abject and peasant culture, even while such claims are not sustainable in the face of the absence of systems of rational decision making. Take for example Spinoza's perfectly defensible claim about bourgeois life and human bondage: "The impotence of man to govern or restrain

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27. Rawls, John (1971) A Theory of Justice, cited in (Ed.) M. Sandel, Liberalism and its Critics. New York: NYU Press: 51.

28. Chwaszcza, Christina, and Schemmel, Christian (2009) John Rawl's Theory of Justice and its Critics, accessed 10 March 2010. http://www.eui.eu/Documents/DepartmentsCentres/SPS/Seminars/SeminarsF09/CCWSemOutlineF09.pdf

29. Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor, Dialectic of Enlightenment: 40. URL http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=lwVjsKcHW7cC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9-&dq=enlightenment+limits&ots=8PIl33NOsu&sig=TOqCsdhpZcf8SJLZAfpIWS-j0zkE#v=onepage&q=enlightenment%20limits&f=false

30. Poster, Mark, Aronowitz, Stanley (commentary) 2001. The Information Subject. Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association: 162.

the emotions I call bondage, for a man who is under their control is not his own master, but is mastered by fortune in whose power he is, so that he is often forced to follow the worse although he sees the better before him."[31] It is not too much to suggest that this is the standard cultural value proposition for all educated and respectable people: self control. It is a web of values and standards to which civil society directs itself and to which Somerset Maugham dedicated his best known novel, *Of Human Bondage*.[32] This web of values is in fact relatively dynamic, that is to say, a moving and fungible set of embedded cultural notions of Enlightenment standards of human behavior - universals. These standards define the state of things in civil society. The point at which these standards could be broken has always been the subject of an uncertain relationship between authority and "the people." It is around this uncertainty that Spinoza was casting his claims, suggesting that bondage was the result of the absence of government and restraint, in his case, based on a supreme theological notion of decency. (I am taking the liberty of using Spinoza's concept of "emotion" and "bondage" to describe the Enlightenment moment in which he was living, rather than his attachment to the Enlightenment). The fact that immaturity would result from uninformed engagement with emotion is a foundational Enlightenment construct, remade in keeping with ancient ideas proposed by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Pleasures are an impediment to rational deliberation..."[33] Immaturity also provides the cultural foundation for ideas about human nature needing guidance within society – which is what Kant was arguing.

Debates about the Enlightenment are broad ranging and fill departments of philosophy and law schools, and they emerge in cultural studies and political science. They incorporate shifts in orientation that concentrate on and challenge the commitment to "a moral law that surpasses our power of representation and cognition," which seeks "a condition of greater justice or emancipation."[34] These principles and critical arguments about them are derived from Kant whose welcome ghost inhabits the field of epistemology in all its diversity. They are also eminently plastic, especially within theories of liberal democracy, where the view that "citizenship" should incorporate efforts "to set our own narrow interests for the common interests of society..." reflects the appeal to maturity and reason in the competing fields of the individual and the community, against which there is a "preoccupation with individual rights and autonomy, and the deterioration of civility, the decline of democratic participation, and the overemphasis

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31. Spinoza, Benedictus, de (1949, originally published 1675) Ethics, New York: The Hafner Press: 187

32. Franklin, Ruth (2010) "The Great and the Good." The New Yorker, May 31: 70-75.

33. Quoted in Posner, Richard (1995) Sex and Reason, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press: 1.

34. Harpham, Geoffrey (1999) Shadows of Ethics: criticism and the just society. Durham: Duke University Press: 78-79.

on individuals' self interest."[35] These kinds of anxieties about self interest emerged in modern times in the US especially, influenced by the work of Ayn Rand, which prompted the rise of the libertarian political movement and its advocacy of rationality as the pathway to self-interest, rugged individualism and self-determining moral action within capitalism.[36]

To reiterate, the basis of the social world is founded on Enlightenment principles which are mostly left as uncontested standards. Civil society operates along the lines of "collective participation in public affairs," which has connotations of "civility," "civilization" and "socialization"[37] Immanuel Kant's point was to highlight the relationship between the individual and the community and in doing so raise questions about just what maturity means in terms of Enlightenment ideals, when measured under the magnifying glass of rationality. In pointing to these landmark ideas about rationality my purpose is to highlight the way culture has been structured around these ideas that form a pattern of everyday life.

The economic model of bounded rationality

If everyday life as it is understood in the advanced west has been built around principles that emerged in the Enlightenment, the argument should follow that knowledge is embodied in those principles. Assuming that is a true statement, what happens if knowledge unravels? What happens if knowledge and the attending Enlightenment principles are constituted in different ways, so that they are no longer operational? What happens if immaturity dominates the social world, because in terms of Kant's narrative, King Fredrick has been removed? The evidence in the communication and media domain points to the redundancy of Enlightenment ideals and the emergence of transgressive forms of knowing that do not look like Enlightenment knowledge. Indeed, I want to assert that contemporary moral economy is such that rationality according to Enlightenment notions of civil society is not present. Instead, transgressive knowledge is increasingly evident. In this section I want to canvass how some ideas about rationality have been utilized in economics and in so doing further explain the formation of proletarianization.

As a discipline, economics has been profoundly informed by Enlightenment notions of rationality, as a style of empiricism. The system of meaning that has been claimed by economics can be illustrated by looking at the emergence of bounded rationality, which has been presented as a systemat-

35. McGregor, Joan (2004) Civility, Civic Virtue, and Citizenship." In (Ed) C. T. Sistare, Civility and its Discontents: Essays on Civic Virtue, Tolerance, and Cultural Fragmentation. University Press of Kansas: 25-43 (25).

36. Biddle, Craig (2009) Loving Life: The Morality of Self-Interest and the Facts that Support It, Glen Allen: Glen Allen Press.

37. Balibar, Etienne (2001) "Outlines of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence." Constellations, Vol. 8, No. 1:15-29 (15).

ic response to neo-classical economics, where *homo-economicus* is given preferred agency. In the neo-classical world of economic manhood, Enlightenment rationality is culturally empowered by the socially constructed claim that information makes it possible for human beings to embody *homo-economicus* and thus act in their own best interests. The argument is that humanity is best served by a system of frictionless information flows that allow self-interested decisions to be made by the rational individual in his or her best interests. The debate about this claim is long, fulsome, determined, scholarly, polemical, sometimes vacuous, and most importantly, political. Institutional economics keenly bought into the fight through the work of Herbert Simon and more recently Oliver Williamson, whose 1985 book *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism*, highlighted bounded rationality through what he termed "economizing transaction costs."[38] Williamson's argument is especially influential because he argued that to understand organizations and their evolution within capitalism it was necessary to put the transactions within them front and centre and thereby identify how the governance of that organization and its interests operated according to rational standards of decision making behavior. Rationally examining the nature of human interactions (exchanges) within organizations would reveal either efficiencies or barriers to efficiency, argued Williamson. What was required was a commitment to analyzing the cognitive capacities behind human transactions and a better understanding of economics and organizations would follow. The questions that arise from this field are complex and a distraction to ponder here in detail. The point is that bounded rationality reinforced Enlightenment standards which remained a reference point for analysis, even while rationality and limits on human cognition came to be seen as a suspect category for assessing economic and social behavior.[39]

The background for much of this work in institutional economics was the dilemma set out by John Commons in his essay "Institutional Economics." Commons point was two-fold: he sought to identify and create institutional spaces where social and economic ideas and interests entered into a contest within liberalism; secondly, and this is clearer in retrospect, he wanted to permanently establish then mobilize the struggle over individual and collective interests. In this history, the fundamental turn is to an imagined Enlightenment sense of rationality, a reasonableness that will produce "what ought" to be the best outcomes for the institution, the individual and the society. The obvious questions concern the amount of weight that is given to the individual and the institution in society. At what point do the collective interests – the culture of society – give way to self interest. Bounded rationality struggled with this balancing act.

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38. Williamson, Oliver (1985) The Economic Institutions of Capitalism. New York: The Free Press: 17.

39. Conlist, John (1996) "Why Bounded Rationality?" Journal of Economic Literature, Vol. 34: 669-700.

Much of the Enlightenment baggage as proposed by Kant has been incorporated into bounded rationality, which in turn can be viewed as the standard system for assuming that human agency operates within a structured system of meaning. This is the point of the debate between structuralists and post-structuralists, where political theory is informed by theories of rationality. The tension over agency and structure reflects the speed with which individualism has gained prominence in a struggle with and to the determent of collective interests. In this context, bounded rationality can be viewed as a political strategy that is not removed from Veblen's evolutionary economics.It takes on individualistic ideology by pointing to the limits of effective decision making, when collective information is not available and conditions are not perfect. In other words, as an exercise in revisiting Kantian logic, bounded rationality has insisted on cognition as an endless system of transactions where the individual is given prominence.

The near-exhaustion of this theory generated behavioral economics. Once again, an appeal to rationality came from economists who claimed that rational human decision making could be theorized and in so doing offer a structure for the agency of that monumental object-that-would-not-go-away, *homo economicus*.[40] The interdisciplinary nature of behavioral economics is key to understanding the appeal of rationality. Its focus is actually on the "science" of psychology, which reflects a return to empirical, even positivist attempts at Enlightenment certainty. Indeed, the argument goes that if psychology as a science can explain human behavior, then the entire system of human interactions can be explained. What is important here is not the detail of emerging analytical systems. Rather, what is important is the trend to give up economic orthodoxy by utilizing interdisciplinary approaches to claim rationality as the prevailing system of human behavior. What this trend indicates is anxiety among academics about the shift away from Enlightenment standards of rationality. They give way to irrationality.

In reviewing, Dan Airely's book *Predictably Irrational: The hidden forces that shape our decisions* in the *Journal of Economic Issues*, Tim Wunder noted that for 20 years institutional economics has been questioning "utility maximization theory" which is "not fundamentally based on a rationalistic vision of the individual."[41] The appeal to rationality is a powerful force, as indicated by Airely's intervention in favor of the "irrational", which may be nothing more than a discussion about manners in civil society. When viewed from the behavioral economic perspective, irrational behavior is a step from the predictability of the structures of rational processes and explanations. Within this changing landscape, rationality as a form of Kantian maturity is slipping as the standard by which to analyze what is happening in the so-

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40. Thaler, Richard and Mullainathan, Sendhil (2008) "Behavioral Economics," The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics, URL accessed 5 August 2010, http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/BehavioralEconomics.html

41. Wunder, Timothy (2009) Review of Predictably Irrational. Journal of Economic Issues, 43 (1): 278.

cial world. Perhaps it should be no surprise that in the 20 year period that economics has attempted to prove with mathematical precision that human life is determined by the self-interested *homo economicus*, the Internet has emerged and the appeal to irrationality has grown. This relationship is important for explaining an equally pressing anxiety that is part of the larger world of ideas about the public sphere. That is, as Jurgen Habermas asked in 1962 in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, is diminishing rationality an indicator of "refeudalization?" Does the emergence of irrationality unpack the historical assumptions that created "civilization" out of feudalism? Is irrationality a means of undoing civil society as it has been known?

Unbounded Irrationality

In contrast to bounded rationality with its roots in Kantian Enlightenment, I want to propose the alternative – unbounded irrationality, with its roots in the Internet's informationization.[42] In this new context, the digital can be seen as the means of increasing the circulation of irrational aspects of human behavior because it operates outside the rudimentary characteristics of knowledge as defined by Enlightenment standards. As I noted above, questions about irrational behavior offer a way of thinking about the sources of transgressive knowledge. The rise of behavioral economics offers an interdisciplinary perspective on human nature while at the same time suggesting that the anxiety associated with moves from Enlightenment rationality is strong. Drawing on theories of human cognition that explain transactions and decisions making, it attempts to establish a predictive set of probabilities for human action in the economy and indeed in society at large. In contrast, unbounded irrationality is a way of conceiving of the open terrain on which human activity operates, much like the peasants' "definable practical ends" Hobsbawm was writing about.

Unbounded irrationality (which is dangerously close to tautological) is derived from the absence of known categories of human reason and thus removes the certainty of Enlightenment logic from explanations of human behavior. In contrast, the lens of transactions as presented in bounded rationality offers a limited and limiting set of calculations that are indeed "bound" by acceptable standards of knowledge and progress. In effect, the history of Enlightenment reason is about the negotiation of contested ideas within known territories of "civilized" values. What those values are is open to dispute and as Michel Foucault's work showed, open to change within rational boundaries. The definitions themselves are constructed from Enlightenment notions of maturity.

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42. Lash, Scott (2002) Critique of Information. London: Sage Publications and Hassan, Robert (2004) Media Politics and the Network Society. Maidenhead: Open University Press and McGraw Hill.

In the philosophical realm the preeminent reference is Fredrick Nietzsche. He argued that the imposition of morals was a limitation on "life affirmation" and the need for honest questioning of "all doctrines that drain life's expansive energies" was the effective means to "launch effective social critique."[43] By seeking to negate the pre-determined standards of human behavior (defined by western notions of morality) Nietzsche invoked the foundation for unbounded irrationality. He was not the only philosopher to do so, but as Arthur Kroker pointed out, the implications of Nietzsche's perspective has catastrophic implications for Enlightenment standards of reason when considering digital technology. In this "technologically overdetermined society," suggested Kroker, power "reverses the direction of the table of moral values." Here technical power, or "technicity" becomes an instrument for "moral primitivism," where "new moral eugenics" accompanies "hyper-technological rituals of scapegoating and sacrifice" while "the joys of cruelty and the cynical pleasures of inflicting pain and pure revenge taking" is the future.[44] This Nietzscheian perspective on networked technology suggests how dramatically challenging unbounded irrationality can be.

Another way of explaining unbounded irrationality is through the lens of global social theory which offers a rejectionist view, namely that the Enlightenment is a western construct. The question is why are the dominant ideas about values determined and described by "western" constructions of reason and rationality? The question returns the discussion to Fredrick Nietzsche and the radical way his inquiry sought to remove itself from the established boundaries of western philosophy. The consequences of his thought were that notions of "evil" became tolerable – thus his interest in and support for fascism and Nazi ideology operated outside the tolerable boundaries of rational human values as evidenced by Enlightenment standards. And while this is an extreme example, the benefit of thinking about unboundedness in association with irrationality is to be found in the extremes that quickly unsettle what is known and assumed to be acceptable universal values. In taking on that thought exercise it is easier to appreciate how Enlightenment values are embodied in everyday interactions that are bound by habit, where habit itself is a construct, as Thorstein Veblen argued.

An additional understanding of unbounded irrationality can be seen in the "debate" about Edward Said's concepts of colonialism in *Orientalism*.[45] Said's controversy can now be seen in the long view, where his original resistive, non-western Orientalist views from the 1970s give way to conciliatory, even "mature" western Enlightenment views by the late 1990s. What

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43. Wicks, Robert (2010) Fredrick Nietzche, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy." Accessed 6 August 2010, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzche

44. Kroker, Arthur (2004) The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche and Marx. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press: 85-86.

45. Ashcroft. Bill and Ahluwalia, Pal (2009) Edward Said, second edition. New York: Routledge: 4-5.

can be deemed Said's views of inter cultural conflict - Eastern and Western world views - are suggestive of a larger challenge in the Internet era, namely the intense interaction of western and non-western perspectives on universals and values in general. "The cross cultural study of selfhood" incorporates a range of opinions about the "method of thinking," which continues to shift.[46] In fact, following Said, post-colonial literature is instructive in the way it draws on the tacit boundaries of Enlightenment rationality and the values therein. These values continue to be thrown into relief by the rise of Chinese and non-western forms of thought and policy making that are actively resistant to an unproblematized Enlightenment. In what has been termed "the debate about 'Asian values'," "the universality bestowed upon Enlightenment values by their authors became a justification of imperialism and its catastrophic consequences. As a result, a critical stance toward Enlightenment values has become a standard component of current Asian thinking."[47]

Not everyone accepts this critique. For example the work of Amartya Sen incorporates assumptions that illustrate the way Enlightenment ideas circulate. Sen claims for example that the world's poor will benefit from "the great advantages of contemporary technology, the well established efficiency of international trade and exchange and the social as well as economic merits of living in an open society."[48] These classifications are of course, formed around Enlightenment values of rationality that have been taken up as civil society traditions. Indeed, from a critical perspective Sen's work appeals to western-oriented, well educated audiences who embody Enlightenment notions - the Nobel Committee which awarded him the 1998 Nobel Prize for economics, meanifests those values. In his work, Sen places social and economic advances in India, Asia and the Middle East in the same context as the rise of individuality and technology in the Enlightenment, thereby claiming that everyone wins from globalization's shared universals. The apparent result is a win-win, according to Sen. Divergent patterns of national development in the east and the west are papered over to be viewed as extensions of economic development. Seen from the critical perspective of unbounded irrationality, Sen projects western standards of rational human development such as "technology" and "open society" into new contexts. Unbounded irrationality insists on asking the difficult question: should these standards be applied? The conditions that apply in non-western places require an understanding of the history and traditions of the cul-

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46. Murray, D. W. (1993) What is the Western Concept of Self: On Forgetting David Hume," Ethos, Vol. 21 No.1: 3-23 (4); Dupré Louis (1994) The Enlightenment and the intellectual foundations of modern culture, New Haven, Yale University Press :7.

47. Golden, Sean (2006) "Socio-cultural aspects of the relationship between the EU and Asia, with particular reference to China." Asia Europe Journal, Vol. 4, No. 2: 265-292, 267.

48. Sen, Amaryta (2002) "How to Judge Globalism." American Prospect, Vol. 13 (1): 4. Available at http://www2.econ.uu.nl/users/marrewijk/pdf/ihs/geo/sen%202000%20-judge%20glob.pdf

ture. The universals of western European social life are just that: universal in the west. Indeed, many of these matters are not comfortable to consider against the ideology of the universal Enlightenment standards of individual growth and development within the upward movement of economic activity.

To contrast this situation with an alternative view is to make the point about continuing claims to rationality. For the past couple of decades an economy of technoboosters has gathered around the Internet to present the inevitability of the Internet as a rational extension of technology. One example will suffice. Cass Sunstein argued in *Infotopia* that many thousands of individual contributions to Internet activity generate "information aggregation" and "cumulative knowledge" to benefit society, producing "deliberative democracy" (derived from Jurgen Habermas).[49] Here then is a manifestation of a preferred Enlightenment category of rationality. Derived from Habermas to be sure, Sunstein connects contemporary enthusiasm for the Internet's "swarm" to Habermas's rationality claims which were discussed in chapter 4. Sunstein, a brilliant legal scholar, presents an optimistic understanding of information that conflates knowledge with information, before assuming that the outcome will include deliberation (rational argument?) as well as democracy (US style?). His argument - one of many – offers a view that can be described as "mature" in a Kantian sense, yet fails to unpack the counterargument, namely that there may not be a relationship between deliberative democracy, or democracy of any kind and the Internet's information / knowledge flows. In fact, Sunstein's approach assumes somewhat mystically, that digital technology's power productively generates democratic outcomes. Is there evidence of a cause and affect relationship between information / knowledge and deliberative democracy? The answer is that there is a theory of cause and effect. Unbounded irrationality illustrates that approaches such as Sunstein's are optimistic teleological constructions based on Enlightenment assumptions of rationality. They are part of a debate about rationality and irrationality, within the history of technology.[50]

Monitor space: is individual empowerment rational?

Mark Poster's much used phrase "outside the pattern of the rational" has a lot of appeal.[51] According to Poster along with numerous scholars who have quoted the phrase, Information and Communication Technologies give rise to richer social relations based on new digital language and increased sub-

49. Sunstein, Cass (2006) Infotopia: how many minds produce knowledge. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press: 8 and 11.

50. Schwartz Cowan, Ruth (2010) "Looking Back in Order to Move Forward: John McDermott, Technology the Opiate of the Intellectuals." Technology and Culture, Vol. 51, January: 199-215.

51. Poster, Mark (1995) The Second Media Age, Cambridge, Polity Press: 95.

jectivity. By generating new language and subjectivity, ICTs move beyond the established boundaries of rationality. My argument, somewhat extending Poster's, is that the emergence of new language(s) of and within technology when combined with the subjectivity of digital personhood - for example, life on the Internet - operates beyond the boundaries of Enlightenment rationality. As I suggested above, Enlightenment concepts of rationality are drawn upon to offer cause and affect security to theoretical claims.

To return to my criticism of Sen, global development occurs in keeping with western notions of rational economic progress. Now however, the Internet makes it possible to establish new social relations which are not mature, according to Kantinan notions of rationality. Indeed, questions about Enlightenment values based on rationality are directly problematized by the Internet. There is every reason to believe – with Kant's "Enlightenment" and Horkheimer's and Adorno's "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" – that previously established patterns of civility and decency in human relations degenerate into untenable systems of unreasonableness, unbounded irrationality, or "barbarity," as communication incorporates patterns of behavior from outside the rational, the known and the managed.

Nowhere has this happened more than in human interaction with the computer screen or "the monitor." This interface offers the realization of an Enlightenment fantasy – the realization of the individual as a knowing subject. This space is defined by the one-on-one interaction, in a complex of technical, psychological, physiological, anatomical, historical forces that insist on an interdisciplinarity that is inherently transgressive. It does not stabilize existing concepts of personhood, yet the intensity of interactions with the monitor space defines and redefines subjectivity within multiple identities.[52] It is a rich terrain for theory and a potential *cul de sac* for knowledge. All of which creates unwelcome challenges to the belief that the Internet is beneficial in its networked connectivity to global information and knowledge. In other words, the monitor raises questions about rationality, about previously existing categories of knowledge. The monitor also raises questions about how to identify new knowledge that is transgressive. It also raises questions about knowledge that operates outside Enlightenment standards of civil society. Is it possible then that new knowledge is "admitted" to civil society through the network and the computer monitor? Is it even possible to recognize new knowledge that is not bound by the existing standards of rationality?

In the monitor space, the perspective on individualized identity is reinforced in the way the Internet delivers information to the individual. "The monitor" is shorthand for a description of individual information devices, from mobile / cell phones to personal, screen-based technologies of all shapes and sizes. The primary characteristic of this screen is that it is a space where the individual is positioned alone in a unique relationship with

52. Dery, Mark (1997) Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the end of the Century. New York: Grove Press.

a global digital delivery network that manifests itself in the video monitor. In this technical sense, the relationship is rational. The digital delivery system of the Internet, the network, delivers data to an individual in an environment defined by transactions: economic, social and cultural transactions. This is why "boundedness" and its various derivations (bounded rationality, unbounded irrationality) is constructive as a means of analysis for the Internet. Transactions are driven by the incentive for profit which is "irrationally exuberant," while they are also driven by human curiosity and the desire for knowledge. Knowledge itself is problematized by the flow of data and information, which are unformed types of rationality. What users experience at the monitor combines creative artifacts as cultural symbols with multiple meaning possibilities for the user. It is from the multiple meaning possibilities that unbounded irrationality emerges and which remains to be fully elaborated upon, largely because most analysis is constrained by Enlightenment notions of reason.

There is a challenge to Enlightenment rationality in both its production (why was it made?) and its consumptions (how was it used?). At the monitor the individual is no longer constrained by the social forces that engage civility, because privacy and solo use offers a different mode of social interaction. This is the point at which Foucault suggests that "We must try to proceed with the analysis of ourselves as beings who are historically determined, to a certain extent, by the Enlightenment."[53] And in contradistinction in the Internet era, as beings who are no longer determined by the Enlightenment!

It is possible to reappropriate Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation here? Where advertising and the media calls out the subject according to Althusser, the monitor space doubly interpellates the individual – that is, it creates a structure of meaning that firstly reinforces the individual as subject by calling the person into autonomous action after already calling the individual into a relationship with privatized and commercial, digital technology. In this way the Internet reinvigorates individual identity by allowing the new subject(s) to emerge. For my purposes, the new subject is linked to unregulated proletarian instincts that are "liberated" in and around data networks. The flow of these proletarian "instincts" is expressed as any number of identity acts within the Internet, including the abject. This shift in subjective empowerment represents a new social movement because new ideas about behavior are available in the monitor space as it draws on the global network. More persuasively, the monitor space has moved out from under the bourgeois regulatory system of Enlightenment rationality to allow proletarianization.

Within proletarianization "hidden" ideas and behavior are no longer constrained by social mores and laws, by regulations within the "deliberative democratic" system. These constraints on the barbarity of the market, of human actions and interaction, on human rights, are given away when reg-

53.Foucault, Michel, (1994) "What is Enlightenment": 313.

ulation - Enlightenment standards and values - is removed. In this mode of operation, the refusal to accept the standards of decency, equality and justice give way to alternative standards, at once established by the individual at the monitor screen and at another point when those subjective monitor standards incorporate moves "outside the pattern of the rational."

The monitor space generates a process that brings about privatism. Hobsbawm hinted at it (above) with his throw away comment that driving involves madness as does the recent emergence of witchcraft. His fellow countryman Raymond Williams was more precise in his introduction of the term "mobile privatization," suggesting that it had become "a unique modern condition", "an unprecedented condition" where "people are increasingly living as private small-family units, or, disrupting even that, as private and deliberately self-enclosed individuals, while at the same time there is a quite unprecedented mobility of such restricted privacies."[54] Internet privatism is like a dance. It is at once led by the new power of subjectivity at the monitor, demanding that the previously established Enlightenment standards of rationality be removed to be replaced by the intensified "self-enclosure" that bothered Williams. As the self-enclosed subjects join the network they engage proletarianization through unbounded irrationality. In turn, the new subjectivity of privatism prompts "official" responses that try to claw back rationality with new regulations. In so doing officials seek to address the Enlightenment standards of the community. In the newly privatized context the complex of individual and community standards struggles over Internet content and its meaning for civil society. Thus my tentative answer to the question in the title of this section, Is individual power rational? The Internet challenges Enlightenment standards through privatism's empowered subjectivities. Privatism is not mediated by Enlightenment reason.

Would it be going too far to suggest that Internet privatism remakes the "most unsparing criticism" that Engels claimed was operationalised in the French Enlightenment? (After all, uncompromising Jacobean rationality was found at the guillotine!) Indeed, is it possible that claims of rationality in the Internet era incorporate the abject and their notions of reason? If like Hobsbawm's peasants, there are "definable practical ends" then perhaps anything is rational? Does this "reason" compete directly with the rationality of the default position of the Enlightenment? Does this characterize proletarianization? These questions are intentionally provocative in the way they establish the conflict between two modes of seeing and experiencing the world: Enlightenment standards of reason and knowledge, versus barbarity, the abject's invocation to its sense of reason, its moral economy, its transgressive knowledge. The former exists within the history of the Enlightenment and civility, while the latter stands outside Enlightenment standards and is present because of the Internet. In the next chapter

54. Williams, Raymond (1983) Towards 2000. London: Chatto and Windus / The Hogarth Press: 189.

I discuss the way public policy shifted as privatization challenged previously existing Enlightenment standards, allowing the monitor space to be unregulated.

Chapter 7

"Careful What You Wish For." Public Policy

Learning American public policy

On August 4, 1996 I left Australia with my family for an academic job at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. With my doctoral dissertation as well as a career as a technology consultant for the Department of State Development in the Government of Victoria behind me, I confidently planned my move to "the big time." After a year and a half representing the industry development end of the government, my view was that good people could do good things in the national and local public policy arena by being engaged with policy makers, bureaucrats and business people at a global level. People like me work in and around governments for a lot of reasons, not least because we believe we can help economic and social development at the local and national level. It may look and sound like nationalism and it is, but if I didn't do this work who would? The answer to that question was that it was people I probably didn't trust. My goal was to manipulate social policy into and within the public policy space. I was invigorated and refreshed with the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) 1994 "Creative Nation" policy plan for Australia with a creative and electronic arts focus. I had sat one row in front of Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating and his wife Anita at the Melbourne launch of the policy featuring the actor Sam Neil. At that time, I was, as the ALP liked to say, "a true believer."

My work had been a case of appropriating "Think Global, Act Local," to remake it more in line with "Go Global, Stay Local." My government issued corporate credit card helped paper over the questions and contradictions of what might really be happening to new media both locally and globally. As I was taught to say much later by my Gartner Group mentor, Dan Kidd, "I had skin in the game!" But first of all, I was going to be an American academic.

In my dealings with business people in the US there was always a sense that what I was doing for industry development did not connect with either their global or local selves. As for social policy: on that front, my priorities were not theirs. It didn't matter how many VIPs I met, wined and dined, or how many hours I spent traveling business class on QANTAS, there was a knowing feeling that we did not connect, even though I was a policy specialist: it was what my Ph.D. was about. I left all that behind and thought little about it until I settled in Chapel Hill and began reading "The 1996 Telecommunications Act." Then, as the context of my new life in America was slowly reconstituted, the communications wall I met in corporate America began to have meaning. I realized that while I may have moved to the United States, I had not comprehended that public policy in the USA was part of a foreign culture. In the US, telecommunications meant economy whereas in Australia it had meant growing up with the General Post Office as a public good, telecommunication Universal Service Obligations to create a Commonwealth for the public. In Australia, telecommunications had been part of a social policy notion of the common wealth, informed by a poorly lit socialist light on the hill. By 1996, ideas like those were on the cutting room floor. The Internet was already here and Al Gore was "inventing" one of the biggest wealth creation systems in history: the Internet. As the saying goes: I had no idea! Naïve to the core, I misread and misunderstood what was in front of my eyes: a policy dedicated to emancipating telecommunications from the public interest to continue the aspirational ideal of American entrepreneurial history in new technology.

An informed American would know what the 1996 Telecommunications Act was about. The priorities were in the first paragraph:

> To promote competition and reduce regulation in order to secure lower prices and higher quality services for American telecommunications consumers and encourage the rapid deployment of new telecommunications technologies.[1]

This looked to be a defensible set of claims with which most good people would agree. But as cultural studies has taught us, and indeed as Justice Stephen Breyer of the US Supreme Court noted: "[C]ontext, not just literal text, will often lead a court to Congress' intent in respect to a particular statute".[2] And so it came to be that I was subjected to a type of policy mis-

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1.The Telecommunications Act of 1996. Available at URL http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/tcom1996.pdf

2.http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/08pdf/07-1125.pdf Id., at 127 (Breyer, J., concurring)

communication of the highest order: literal text that betrays intent. The penny dropped when I left UNC to return to consulting. On joining Gartner Group in 1999 I met Americans who seemed pathologically incapable of uttering the phrase "social policy." Then I understood that cultural studies and cultural policy studies in the USA were dancing around their own graves because they were not connected to political economy, but to their own self interest. That was what seemed to drive US political economy. This realization was disappointing then frustrating as I came to understand that the 1996 Telecommunications Act was indeed an "act:" it was a performance of "US exceptionalism," constituted by "ignorance," "parochialism," "the illusion of uniqueness" within the "durable mythology" of the "public" in public policy.[3] The continuation of exceptionalism as it played out in The 1996 Telecommunications Act bemused me with the possibilities of what new technology could achieve. Wrongly, as it turned out, I assumed the policy had moved beyond David Noble's characterization of corporate capitalism and its "production of a world" where new engineering management systems implemented the plans of "the self perpetuating oligarchy of a shop-culture elite who had become leaders of industry."[4] Postmodernity or some such reordered possibility had, I believed, moved us beyond Noble's modernist critique to a place where the digital technology of the Internet offered a remaking of capital in such a way that time and space would collapse into a new hyperproductive "regime of accumulation," replete with redistributive energy.[5] Wasn't that what progressive public policy sought? It expressed the aspirations of people who believed that some kind of good life was available to everyone in the promised land of telecommunications. Magazines like *Mondo 2000* and *Wired* became the markers for possibilities. If I had read the magazine *Fast Money* I would have known what the policy was really about!

In fact, I would have been much better informed if I had historicized my knowledge of US telecommunication policy by going back before 1996. Once I realized how long the dismembering of public policy had been underway, I recognized how the Internet's unintended consequences emerged to create opportunities for proletarianization. This knowledge emerged from the limited canvas of my original understanding of US telecommunications policy. I was less capable of recognizing how the networked economy operated as a global system of cultural reproduction through the Internet, and that such a game had been changed. Proletarianization was a suspicion, but still made classroom lectures at Chapel Hill in 1998. Its theoretical formulation within and articulation to the Internet was emerging.

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3. Chaplin, J.E. (2003) "Expansion and Exceptionalism in Early American History." Journal of American History, Vol. 89, No. 4.

4. Noble, D, (1979) America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 37, 342.

5. Harvey, D. (1990) The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry Into the Condition of Cultural Change, Oxford, Blackwell: 121.

My task was to comprehend the shift from that of a managerialist policy advocate doing cultural studies, to an informed critic with a political economy focus within cultural studies. The transition was straightforward: watch the entire edifice of policy making celebrate its exceptionalism, then rock unsteadily as it reached its limited threshold of social policy objectives. From this perspective, the dominant culture found it difficult to address the way public policy has also produced the Internet as a cultural bottom feeder. For this is what public policy has slowly done. It constructed the legal terms and conditions around the Internet so that the network of networks could be a communications device for everyone, without realizing that everyone was not a Washington lobbyist. Everyone came to embody proletarianization and it was not the imagined, rational liberal "everyone."

Public policy produced the unanticipated. It also raised new questions. Was it possible that the emergence of proletarianization was democratic? The shift in my thinking that brought me from liberal public policy advocate to radical critic became a crisis that emerged as I observed the public policy process. It pushed away the conceits and pretense of my good intentions. As it happened, my crisis was an "intensification of the political dilemmas about priorities" as well as a crisis constructed around an understanding of "a combination of events which produce radical transformation of social institutions."[6] In keeping with British cultural studies especially, "the Internet crisis" created a shift away from Enlightenment rationality, as I had innocently considered it, towards brutalization across society: in its institutions and in the taken-for-granted assumptions about regulation as a beacon for managed resource allocation. In brief, the crisis I was experiencing - and I was not alone - has been characterized as "the conservative focus on self-interest, unlimited acquisition and consumption" combined with a culture that promotes behavior that is "predatory, emulatory, and acquisitive."[7] The shift was from tolerance for a market sustained model of public welfare to sharp edged capital-intensification with few restrictions. This transformation in the heft of privatization expressed careful orchestrations of public policy that shaped the Internet to produce shifts in the culture. What can best de described as institutional crisis theory explains the changed circumstances of society due to the Internet. This shift in orientation is part of the larger canvas of dialectical public policy that digital communication technologies mobilized: making policy in order to unmake it.

Henry Giroux characterized what is now generally referred to as neoliberalism, with the kind of trademark grammatical license that evokes the contempt, disgust, pity and abhorrence he seeks to convey for the loss of

6.Hill, M. (1996) Social Policy: A comparative analysis. London: Prentice Hall: 294.

7.Tilman, R (2008) "Institutional economics as social criticism and political philosophy: remarks upon receipt of the Veblen-Commons Award." Journal of Economic Issues, 42.2: 289-303.

democratic possibility in the face of the Internet's new Gilded Age.The years leading up to and following the 1996 Telecommunications Act incorporated,says Giroux:

> a neofeudal world view in which self-interest and the laws of the market are seen as the only true measure of politics. There is also an attack on the idea of the social contract—the state's provision of minimum guarantees of security—and the very notion of democratic politics. Moreover, in this free-wheeling, deregulated market society, the citizen is reduced to a consumer or if labeled as a flawed consumer rendered as excess, redundant, and disposable. Rampant greed, market deregulation, and cut-throat individual competition, lauded in this world of free-market fundamentalism, have produced over the last thirty years an unparalleled degree of social inequality in the United States along with massive dislocations in the basic foundations of society.[8]

In this lyrical critique of the system, public policy is deployed to unmake liberal gains. However, it seems to me that Giroux's claim for liberalism invokes an incipient nostalgia. In this respect, public policy in the US and thus pretty much globally became a positivist enactment of the fundamentals of neoclassical economics, against Giroux's imagined ideals incorporated in his phrase "the basic foundations of society." We are not going back there, whatever those foundations may have been, because this crisis will not be resolved by returning to past foundations. Nevertheless, Giroux seemed accurate in pointing out that public policy was intended to create a kind of feudal digital age where the Internet was the pointy end of the remaking of pre-Enlightenment irrationality, perhaps even barbarity. For me, there had been a ray of light through the application of institutional economics to telecommunications policy which operationalizes "the public interest," as I discuss below.

An appreciation of US Telecommunications history enhanced my sense of crisis and it was not a crisis for me alone. It had consistently built up to become a crisis that was social, economic and political. In effect, it was a crisis that resulted from a concatenation of forces that are sometimes referred to by the somewhat abused term "convergence." As I will show, social policies were rolled back in favor of all things economic. Unfortunately, the Internet highlighted confusion among analysts who mixed standards of human welfare with a mess of empowered financial players. In unraveling the confused standards and policy ideas about the Internet, it is, as William Lehr and Lorenzo Pupillo suggested, wise "to examine the impact of the Internet on multiple policy domains at the same time."[9] It is more important still to keep in mind the range of social, cultural and economic issues the

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8.Giroux, H. (2008) Against the Terror of Neoliberlism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed (Cultural Politics and the Promise of Democracy). Boulder: Paradigm Publishers. Excerpted at URL http://www.counterpunch.org/giroux03302009.html

9. Lehr, William and Pupillo, L. (2002) Cyber Policy and Economics in and Internet Age. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 8.

Internet impacts, and in doing so, engage in open navigation of the policy changes that apply to it. Roger Silverstone and Robin Mansell offered the following advice:

> The key issues for inquiries into the social and economic implications of advanced information and communication technologies, concern the dialectical processes of changes in socio-economic and technical systems, the dynamics of their reproduction and how and by whom such systems are controlled.[10]

The systemic crisis I had not initially understood became comprehensible to me as evidence emerged of "how and by whom" the new communication system was controlled.

Public Interest Amnesia?

The foundational social aspirations of US Telecommunications policy have been about defining "the public interest." The rise of institutional economics largely through the work of John Commons in the days leading up to and through the Great Depression was about ideas about the public. After the excesses of the original Gilded Age and wide interest among the US public in the Bolshevik Revolution, the US government had to set about using the new technology of telephony to create a culture of publicness and a narrative of the national project of competitive success.[11] This move by Gilded Age individualists worked against the national mythology of "opportunity," to produce a discourse within contemporary capitalism about the public interest. Consequently, the historical claims made within US Telecommunications policy for the public interest are expressions of the idealized realization of undifferentiated classes sharing cultural interactions through access to telephony. Regardless of the impression now of The New Deal – FDR's plan to save US capitalism and the American way of life, as conceived in his and Keynes's liberal imaginations – the establishment of a public interest system that produced an ideology at odds with the tenets of capitalism is, by any measure, remarkable. In some respects the 1934 Telecom Act was a statement more radical than a Marxist could envision, outside of a revolutionary claim to the overthrow of the means of production. The idea that the state could sponsor and facilitate rate based telephone interconnection (price regulations) to every citizen is something that was already modeled in socialist theory. Perhaps it was a sign of the regulatory times in the Depression Era in the US, that the 1934 Act is seen as giving the FCC "almost unlimited power to suppress or allow competition."[12] Indeed, the 1934 Act was a significant contribution by institutional economics and its heterodox

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10. Mansell, Robin (1996) "Communication by Design." In (Eds) R. Mansell and R. Silverstone. Communication by Design, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 15-43 (40).

11. Jacoby, Susan, (2009) The Age of American Unreason. New York: Vintage Books.

12. Wilson, Kevin, (2000) Deregulating Telecommunications. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers: 22.

ambitions for economic theory and social development through managed competition.

In some respects this perspective makes a mockery of Louis Althusser's theory of ideology in the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) analysis. In this theory, state institutions expressed the ideology of the state and intentionally so. Althusser's innovation was in identifying the way the structures of capital operate within social institutions, such as the family, schools, the policy apparatus, the judiciary, the media and museums. In understanding the way the state's ideological apparatus directs human behavior and ambition, the theory helps explain questions of ideology and their reproduction within institutions.[13] In more recent times it has been argued that "the commercial turn" has been reinforced by "namings and renamings" that create "the ideological project of the nation" as sites of cultural production and reproduction.[14] Despite claims that the Internet in combination with and as an extension of postmodernity offers escape from ideology and into the arms of a perversely illogical non-ideological marketplace (according to Francis Fukayama and his ilk), it remains necessary to assert the common sense claims of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus: it is impossible to occupy a place distanced from state sanctioned ideology.[15] Just as importantly, any claim *not* to have a state system extends the logic of the apparatus because as long as the culture continues - that is, sentient social and economic relations - every aspect of life operates within the contingencies of the transactions of the marketplace and social utilization. That is, exchange value and use value are always articulated with each other in a sliding scale of relationships.[16]

The public interest became a sort of de facto ideological system of meaning for citizen idealism in the US. This aspect of the history of the public interest as advocated by people like the late Dallas Smythe who worked in the FCC, remains to be more fully analyzed.[17] Meanwhile, institutional economics as proposed by John Commons avoided class warfare while seeking resolutions to the larger questions (developed more recently) of how the multiple ideologies of individuals existed in a "relationship to the complex

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13. Althusser, Louis (1971) "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus: Notes towards an investigation." In Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press.

14. Dirks, Nicholas (1992) "Introduction : Colonialism and Culture." In (Ed) N.B. Dirks, Colonialism and Culture. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press: 1- 26 (16).

15. Hides, S. (2006) "Knowledge / Information: An Internet Symptomology." In (Eds.) K. Sarikakis and D. Thussu. Ideologies of the Internet. Cresskill, New Jersey: IAMCR and Hampton Press: 79-96.

16. Breen, Marcus (1999 / 2006) Rock Dogs: politics and the Australian Music Industry. Sydney, Pluto Press: 211. Republished by University Press of America.

17. Mosco, Vincent (2009) The Political Economy of Communication, Los Angeles, London: Sage: 83-103.

and indeed unrepresentable totality of collective and institutional realities all around it."[18] In this characterization of the lived dilemma of multiple contemporary ideologies, Fredric Jameson (apparently unwittingly) revisits John Commons's core contribution to contemporary social theory, specifically policy making. The emphasis in Jameson's reading is, as I see it, fear of human nature. When seen through the lens of institutional economics, the public interest incorporates a simpler possibility, yet it does not exclude what we now understand about subconscious forces at play in the individual and the collective spaces we navigate. (This is not the place to detail the contribution of psychoanalytic theory to policy making, although it is important).

The principles of institutional economics as proposed by John Commons suggest the potential breadth of the liberal policy process beginning with the assumption that rational people can identify a problem and logically establish a causal chain that contributes to the solution. As I noted in the earlier chapter on class and technology, Commons was concerned with proposing technocratic solutions that would manage capitalism while building liberalism around a consensus based on industrial models of governance. His insight was to theorize how a society would operationalize a cultural navigation process that combined collective action with individual action. His solution was that the state would become an institution creating organism that allowed *and* facilitated the entire range of human interests to be expressed. "Thus an institution is collective action in control, liberation and expansion of individual action," is how Commons expressed this aspiration.[19]

The valences of Commons's institutional schematization were redefined as evolving concepts of collective *and* individual action, reproduced under the intense heat of capital. Consequently, the full range of collective potentialities was diminished within the ambit of capital's furnace, despite the legal framework that established the public interest. In so doing constraints were thrown up to limit the heterodox and inclusive radicalism of institutional economics, as Althusser's ISA suggested. Instead, law and legislation expressed the interests of capital, thereby returning to a limited range of options that predated Commons' concepts. "Bounded rationality" became the focal point of discussion about how the limits of both collective and individual interacting fields were defined. Part of the explanation was that the discussion within institutional economics itself was constrained, lacking political will in support of collective action which should have incorporated both the angels of someone's better nature as well as the symbolic power of collectivism. In incremental, yet highly orchestrated ways the framework for understanding public interest was bleached like so much dead coral, to

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18. Jameson, Fredric (2001) "Introduction, Louis Althusser." In, Lenin and Philosophy and other essays. New York: Monthly Review Press: xiv.

19. Commons, John (1931) "Institutional economics." URL http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/commons_insteconomics.html

become a sharp edged device that could easily be characterized as antithetical to collective interests. As Commons's institutions were overtaken by the corporate ideology of self-realization within consumerist individualism, real forces went to work on ideas about collective action, not least of which was the red baiting and black listing of the anti-communist 1940s and 1950s, which showed how profoundly opponents of collective action rejected and actively destroyed the possibilities. In US cinema - the key symbolic field of endeavor at the time - as Michael Denning showed, the gains of the cultural front in the US in the 1930s offered political success that could not be allowed to succeed.[20] The US working class movement that saw itself in cinema and sought to mobilize around organized labor and its collective interests was taken on and mostly crushed.

And what became of the public interest? It still exists as a somewhat tacit standard bearer of possibility for public policy. During the most conservative era of the George W. Bush years, the principle was invoked by FCC commissioner Michael Copps in an attempt to build a barrier against the commercialization of the Internet in initiatives such as Network Neutrality. This attempt by the major Internet Service Providers to create tiers of users and charge different rates for different broadband speeds and capacity was about introducing layers of Internet privilege. This is not the place to discuss this important issue about the commercial control of and access to the Internet, rather it is included here simply to indicate how US public policy relies on changing meanings of the public interest. Indeed, contemporary debates have shifted far from Commons concepts of institutionalism, although "the public interest" still gets a run.

The crisis this prompted in me was in realizing how the subterfuge of the shift had been implemented as a gradualist set of programs that were presented as publicly beneficial - such as Net Neutrality - while in fact they were really a well constructed set of maneuvers derived from entrepreneurial mythology by those with the heft to change public policy. In this rendition of the public interest, the Internet can be seen as a tool that fulfilled a dream that began in corporate America. I will explore the historical shifts in the following sections.

"Decorating the cans:"[21] Mapping communication economy in Computer Inquiries 1, 2 and 3

Map building can never hope to include all the forces at work in a democratic system. It can only imagine drawn lines in a cartography of hope. This cartography moves from the point where the current policy context meets democratic ideals and on to the realization that most mapping systems are devoid of the facts that allows them to fully elaborate the landscape. Any

20. Denning, Michael (1989) The Cultural Front. New York, London: Verso.

21. FCC Comissioner Computer Inquiry 2, 1976. See below.

cartography worth its salt will theorize the range of possibilities across an ideological spectrum because a public policy map must acknowledge the terrain of human nature. And yet as I discovered, the public policy terrain has been attenuated by economic interests that create a reterritorialized territory. In market dominated territory, social policy became the subject of the crisis. Seen through this prism, crisis theory helps understand how a series of deregulatory shifts taken by US and global institutions gave way to market-based technology that was profoundly articulated to the Internet. Proletarianization emerged through the Internet once the technology reached the uneducated, the criminal and the abject.

Before elaborating on the specific history of the US crisis, I want to note the silence with which contemporary discussions about these issues appear. There are few references to the history of regulation and the broader context of de-regulatory, pro-market shifts in accounts of the Internet. For example, no mention is made by Lawrence Lessig in *Code and other laws of cyberspace* (1999) of the Computer Inquiries of 1966, 1976 and 1985.[22] Dianne Northfield's comprehensive overview of national and global policy changes, *The Information Policy Maze: Global Challenges – National Responses*, is similarly silent on the historical emergence of digital issues, which are viewed through her lens of competition policy.[23] Andrew Chadwick's 2006 book *Internet Politics* offered an otherwise comprehensive summary of global communications issues, devoid of any analysis of the history of deregulation. In fact, for Chadwick, regulation is considered only in relation to RIPA, the Regulation Investigatory Powers Act, a UK government law introduced in 2000. It mentions deregulation in so far as the UK Government used The Act to monitor Internet traffic for the purpose of finding terror suspects.[24]Such approaches offer little critical space about how markets have been articulated to the Internet to operate as if they are, in Chadwick's case, magically constructed within the economy and its culture. Unsurprisingly, no recent US textbooks in media, communication and cultural studies consider as far as I can determine, the subject at all, (with the exception of Vincent Mosco, Robert McChesney and Saskia Sassen – with apologies to those I have missed) in what can only be a victory for economics. Ironically, it appears from the literature I have examined that economists and lawyers are most likely to examine, historicize and analyze the rise of markets and regulation, with precious few communication studies scholars entering these murky waters: it is taken for granted that we know this history and the regulatory shifts within it.

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22. Lessig, Lawrence (1999) Code and other laws of cyberspace. Basic Books, New York.

23. Northfield, Dianne (1999) The Information Policy Maze: Global Challenges – National responses. Melbourne: RMIT University Press.

24. Chadwick, Andrew (2006) Internet Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 278-279.

Yet regulation has been central to corporate America and US culture in general. Regulation serves a role as market controller; a stabilizer that provides state sanctioned revenue and capital guarantees, despite spurious claims to the contrary about competitive markets. Indeed, the history of telecommunications regulation shows how the map for today's largely unregulated Internet was set up within the prevailing economic system. What subsequently emerged as highly nuanced policy settings formed after the fact, to include protecting children from pornography to the RIPAs of pretty well every national government that wants a seat at the United Nations. By examining the three Federal Communication Commission Computer Inquiries I will show how economy was always the prevalent set of interests in creating the communications system that we now know as the Internet.

To reiterate: the absence of contemporary documentation about the FCC's Computer Inquiries is remarkable, yet once the Internet is historicized in the context of these inquiries and related communication history developments, two concepts become clear: 1. there has been a steady, even inexorable shift towards the liberation of the culture to bring forward proletarianization; 2. market forces are intentionally blind to culture and have been doubly blinded by shifts to the digital.

"The economy of the signal"

History is constructed in ways that make it appear both fallible and fungible. Events that define social policy in telecommunications collide around theories of the state that change with the rise of each new technological innovation. Political economy by any other name is a vast moving feast of socially constructed epistemologies with material consequences. The multiple articulations within the fields of events – political, social, economic, and technological – are fraught with the possibilities of contradictions that are contained within the broadest possible ideological fields. Choices are made as to which aspect of an ideological field will be emphasized and which will be left behind. It is around these choices that this crisis is defined.

It has not always been clear that there has been a crisis about the direction of telecommunications policy from its earliest days. The choices were relatively simple, determined by the technology and the apparent need to communicate in a free market "wild west." This is not to say that the utilization of the technology was not ideological. As James Carey has famously shown, the US telegraph quickly emerged as a central tool in US capitalism when it became valuable as the means to transfer information about stock prices and commodities between the major US cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago, thereby creating the ongoing challenge incorporated in the phrase "the economy of the signal." "The effect of the telegraph on modern life and its role as a model for future developments

in communication have scarcely been explored," Carey noted in 1992.[25] The change in the understanding of time versus space, when information could be transmitted immediately to far away markets, meant that the telegraph signal took on attributes of exchange value. As the generations unfolded, public policy offered a space where the assumptions of the gilded industrial "gentry" could be debated in light of "the public interest." But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

What became known as the Computer Inquiry of 1966 (and thereafter as Computer 1) was the result of the confluence of telephone and telegraph around what we now consider computer technology. Convergence describes this movement in the contemporary context while historically it was the result of large mainframe computers processing data and using the telecommunications infrastructure to send the data as unregulated signals. By the early 1960s, already large amounts of data were being generated and sent over the voice transport system or "common carriage," where the FCC regulated the tariffs that could be charged. In utilizing the telecommunications infrastructure, large US corporations such as IBM - a computer business - came into conflict with the likes of AT&T (or Ma Bell) - a telephone company. Both utilized the phone lines as "communication channels:" and in so doing computer processing came into conflict with the basic telecommunications of voice traffic. That is the key point in this narrative.

The FCC in its institutional public interest wisdom had determined that the original 1934 Telecommunications Act required access for all Americans to basic telephone services: universal service. In order for services to be delivered, telephone providers had to be regulated and a tacit agreement reached to allow natural monopolies run by AT&T to deliver telephone services to rural and remote parts of America. This meant oversight of the build out and maintenance of the telecommunications infrastructure by the FCC. The institution controlled the economy of the signal. Within this term of Carey's the concept of public policy can be appreciated, because it was in the agreements between telephone operators that the questions of economic value were determined. In other words, regulation of voice telephony meant that FCC regulatory oversight guaranteed the operation of the market for monopoly rights and profit. But the FCC was not quite ready to let what later became known as "unfettered capitalism" have its way: "It is urged that the ability to compete successfully depends on the flexibility required to meet the competition, and that the carriers would be deprived of this flexibility if they alone were restricted in their pricing practices and marketing efforts by the rigidities of a tariff schedule."[26] Despite this concern the public interest clearly cast its shadow – in 1966.

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25. Carey, James (1992) Communication as Culture, essays on media and society. New York: Routledge: 201 and 202.

26. FCC, Notice of inquiry (1966) Para. 18.

> Are the service offerings of the common carriers, as well as their tariffs and practices, keeping pace with the quickened developments in digital technology? Does a gap exist between computer industry needs and requirements, on the one side, and communications technology and tariff rates and practices on the other?[27]

In this question it's possible to see the prescience of bureaucratic insight making sense of the digital transformation that was on the horizon. Indeed, in the 1966 Notice of Inquiry, the FCC refers to computerization as harbingers of "this burgeoning industry."[28] In the competitive environment that emerged, data fought to utilize the monopoly transport networks of the (voice) telephone companies. The FCC inquiry attempted to clarify its computer policies in order to discover:

> Under what circumstances data processing, computer information and message switching services or any particular combination thereof – whether engaged in by established common carriers or other entities – should be subject to the Communications Act.[29]

The title of the FCC's notice made clear that major issues had emerged in the relationship between telephony and computerization: "Regulatory and Policy Problems Presented by the Interdependence of Computer and Communication Services and Facilities." Interdependence meant that one could not operate without the other, but one – somewhat surprisingly – was already regulated under Title II, of The Act while the other was not. As a commentator from Cybertelecom noted:

> Contrary to popular mischaracterization, this is not a history of regulatory restraint. This is not a history of the FCC "not regulating the Internet." Rather, this is a history of the FCC taking affirmative and aggressive regulation of communications network, specifically for the benefit of the computer networks. The computer networks were clearly the designated beneficiaries of safeguards.[30]

In this rendition of the inquiries' narrative, the FCC instinct was to balance the opportunities for competitive activity in the emerging computer industry, while the wire line voice telephone (tariffed) business remained regulated around concepts of the public interest. The FCC was aware of what

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27. FCC, Notice of Inquiry (1966) Para 21.

28. FCC, (1966) Para. 13.

29. Regulatory and Policy Problems Presented by the Interdependence of Computer and Communication Services and Facilities (1966) FCC notice of inquiry, FCC 64-1004, Dkt. No. 16,979, 31 Fed. Reg, 14,757, 14,754. Cited in Smith, Delbert D., (1969) "The Interdependence of Computer and Communications Services and Facilities: A Question of Federal Regulation." University of Pennsylvania Law Review,Vol. 117, No. 6 (Apr., 1969): 829-859. URL accessed 9 September, 2009 http://www.jstor.org/stable/3310940

30. No author, Cybertelecom, Computer 1 (1966). Accessed 6 August, 2009, http://www.cybertelecom.org/ci/ci.htm#smith

was at stake in trying to establish how to regulate traditional voice in the common carriage domain, signaling what would follow in later Computer Inquiries and changes to The Telecommunications Act:

> Both the developing industry and the Commission must be prepared to deal with the problems promptly so that they may be resolved in an effective manner before technological advances render solutions more difficult.The Commission is interested not only in promoting the development of technology, but it is at the same time concerned that *in the process technology does not erode fundamental values* (emphasis added).[31]

The "fundamental values" were the standards by which voice telephony was regulated by the FCC. Computer 1 determined the future fields of policy activity which were seen as a bottleneck to the growth and development of computer networks.

Computer 2 was announced in 1976 and worked through the bottlenecks that had become less clearly demarcated in the decade since 1966. This inquiry tried to make clear the definitions of basic services for telephony and enhanced services, splitting the difference with a claim that transmission of voice was regulated by the Commission, while the growing integrated computerized systems that were becoming part of the system were in fact part of both the basic and enhanced services.

> ...It is now necessary to consider if our rules need to be changed in order to give the public the total benefit of this modern technology and at the same time prevent the abuses that concerned us in the original Computer Inquiry. One solution may be to give a more positive definition of data processing service. This would allow carriers to enhance their communications service accordingly but *still prevent the potential abuses that concern us* (emphasis added).[32]

The FCC was trying to maintain the integrity of public interest principles, in which market "abuses" were recognized as the challenge to common carrier ideals. What became clear was that the ongoing advances in computer technology made it difficult to establish definitions that would maintain a separation between data processing and the computer functions that telecommunications firms were installing in their networks. In retrospect it was a confusing result, largely overtaken by the exponential speed with which versions of Moore's Law (computer innovation at which the number of transistors can be placed on an integrated circuit doubles every two years) came into being and transformed the power of the industry. The impetus for market oriented action can be observed in a concurring statement by FCC Commissions Benjamin Hooks, which reflects the tone of the ideological foundations of how the market comes to dominate public interests.

> I do not want any structuring that will reduce carrier innovation in data terminals to decorating the cans at each end of the string or keyboards that pull rather than push. We must, if our policy of competition in the terminal equipment market is to have any substance, acknowledge the capabilities of carriers

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31.FCC, Notice of Inquiry (1966) Para. 24.

32.FCC (1976) In the Matter of Amendment of Section 64.702 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations, Docket No. 20828, Para. 12.

> to participate fully in the technology explosion and further the advancement of modern data communications. This can be done without a parochial view which would define communications carriers, surreptitiously, unwillingly or needlessly, into what we call the highly sophisticated "computer" business.[33]

By the mid 1980s, the arrival and private ownership of Personal Computers meant that traffic across the telephone network was increasing when combined with corporate and global data traffic and the rise of packet switching systems. In fact, packet switching became the foundation for the Internet, meaning that Computer 2 addressed the pressing challenges associated with the technological innovations we take for granted – voice, data and image traveling over the telephone network, or the network of networks that is known as the Internet, and which to all intents and purposes, is an agglomeration of data transport systems. "The highly sophisticated 'computer' business" could not be pushed back into a regulatory bottle in which it had never really existed.

Computer 3 followed on the tail of the break up of AT&T in 1984. These policy actions amounted to a wave of change, where new definitions of regulation of the common carrier were introduced; the way forward for "string with tin cans attached" was a program of government mandated competition that invoked privatization. Common carriage (of voice telephone) was quickly becoming problematic as a concept, because the alternative was a gargantuan monopoly telephone system that would require remaking the regulations. Anyway, AT&T overshadowed all competitors and competition itself became its catch cry as AT&T had disregarded the FCC and its regulations. The break up of AT&T and the formation of the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) in 1984 can be viewed as the sleight of hand intended to bring regulated regionalism to common carriage, while pushing regulation from the FCC down to the state level. This is a well established strategy, where weak state regulators and legislators face the might of telephony and communication industry business interests: Veblen's vested interests. In fact the formation of the RBOCs was a victory for anti-government forces that were well established in the Chicago School of economics which had already celebrated The United States Deregulation Airline Act of 1978, promoted by Alfred E. Kahn under President Jimmy Carter. Importantly, it was not the first time, nor would it be the last that Federal Government shifts away from public interest policy towards private and market-based solutions would be proposed by Democratic Party Presidents.[34] It was significant that AT&T agreed to the break up of its regulated monopoly so that it could get into the computer business: indeed the idea at work here was the appeal of the golden goose of the unregulated computer

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33. FCC (1976) In the Matter of Amendment of Section 64.702 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations, Docket No. 20828, Para. 28.

34. President Bill Clinton along with Vice President Al Gore being in power during the introduction of the 1996 Telecommunication Act and the more controversial reforms of US welfare. Anyone with an interest in this should note the pro-market promotions of Ira Magaziner, a Clinton/Gore advisor on Internet matters.

industry, not the public interest.[35] After divestiture, AT&T put its computer business into the unregulated "fully separated subsidiary," known as AT&T Information Systems.[36] Computer 3 publicized the view that there would be two clear domains – regulated common carriage and the unregulated telecommunications domain of enhanced services, while the definitions applied to each domain were necessarily muddied and knowingly imprecise.[37]

In the meantime, the break up of AT&T unleashed thousands of business people on an unsuspecting American public, not least of which were the new marketing schmoozers from Northern Telecom (Nortel), Bell Labs and Lucent, who discovered how easy it was to make money selling hardware and software to the new regional telephone companies. I met some of the hardware salespeople when I went to work at Gartner in Raleigh, North Carolina – mostly Canadian men who, when they turned 50, found themselves no longer the hipster sales folk at Nortel's Research Triangle Park facility in Durham, so they became consultants doing market segmentation analyses for Gartner (stranger things must have happened).[38] The stories I heard about the volume of telecommunications equipment that was sold to the RBOCs and the Mom and Pop telephone companies after 1985 and then again after the 1996 Act, was a testament to the oft used phrase "follow the money." "The money" followed the technology of the computer equipment market.

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35. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, FR 33581. In summary: "AT&T is restricted from engaging in 'electronic publishing' over its own facilities for seven years, and the BOCs are restricted from providing 'information services' unless and until the decree is changed, or its restrictions are waived," Para. 17.

36. Wikipedia, "AT&T Computer Systems," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AT%26-T_Computer_Systems. Accessed 16 November 2009.

37. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 29, Para 67. "We invite comment on the following issues related to implementation of such an approach.
a. How is "competitive" to be defined in this context, and how is any such definition to be applied? We believe it desirable to establish the criteria that will govern such determinations by general rule. We invite comment on the nature and wording of such a rule.
b. What requirements, if any, should be established to ensure that the treatment of such offerings as part of the regulated offerings does not inhibit entry and effective competition thereafter?
c. If an offering is initially classified as non-competitive and treated as proposed, at what point should its classification and treatment be changed? What criteria should be established for transition toward treatment of a non-competitive offering to a competitive one? What transitional safeguards, if any, should be established to promote such transaction?"

38. One of the best stories I heard was of an alleged Disney World retreat for Nortel sales guys and their clients, when Bruce Springsteen played a set of tunes with Pete Townsend! My attitude to those two was never the same after that story.

In the background, policy changes introduced with Computer 3 made the increasing prominence of the market value of telecommunications and data a priority, underscoring the emergence of the language of temporal capital in the economy of the signal.

> ...we established a framework under which such issues could be analyzed and the most significant inefficiencies of Computer II could be addressed through *ad hoc* waivers. But, while this approach established a framework under which undue inefficiency can be avoided, it has contributed to uncertainty in the capital-intensive telecommunications and related data processing industries where planning decisions often must be made years in advance.[39]

The FCC policy analysts were at least honest when they said "We seek still greater benefits from the unregulated provision of competitive offerings, and the full exploitation of technological innovation and service improvement."[40] From the perspective of change due to the growth of the computer industry, this was something like a license to create multiple legal and economic systems under economic efficiency claims and quality of service promises. Against this background, Computer 3 was quite fundamentally overwhelmed with the volume of change introduced with the AT&T divestiture and the rise of computerization through the network. The FCC knew this when it said: "As a consequence of the divestiture, The (sic) size, scope and incentives of these firms have changed."[41] The FCC could not walk away from its lawful responsibilities to common carriage's voice telephony, yet it had to make adjustments for the digital technology that populated the network. Competition was defined in terms that were blind to content and alive to monopoly practices.

> The important policy question is whether a given offering does or does not have monopoly characteristics, not what its service attributes are. If the offering has such characteristics, regulation may be appropriate. If it does not, regulation should permit competition to flourish. This approach does not turn on the nature or definition of an offering; it turns on its economic characteristics.[42]

Is it any surprise that somewhere down the track "service characteristics" or what might be better termed "content agnostics" became the point around which the competition fetish found its moment? (The network could carry any content, the more the better, economically). Is it also not surprising therefore that proletarianization emerged out of this telecommunications policy context? The game was determined by "economic characteristics." In the world of this kind of political economy, economics trumps everything. This was the tone of the shift in US culture that was codified by this Inquiry, yet gave way to the limitless possibilities of media content through a refusal to regulate the content or service characteristics.

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39. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, FR 33581, Para 7.

40. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, FR 33581, Para 24.

41. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, FR 33581, Para 36.

42. FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, Para 34.

Computer 3 admitted to the inevitability of computerization in the network and in so doing insisted that each component of the network interconnect around conflicting objectives: "We are seeking a result that properly acknowledges competitive pressures and the public interest goals of the statute."[43] The FCC wanted to release the pressure and in so doing, liberalize the regulatory environment.[44] Inevitably, the power of computers pushed the FCC to launch Comparatively Efficient Interconnection (CEI) and ultimately Open Network Architecture (ONA) that tried to meet public interest goals while enabling the economic growth ideals of the computer industry. The shift to the computerized model of growth was clearly more than cans connected by pieces of string. It was a new way of producing economic growth that would be actively *unsupervised* by any authority. The exceptions were that regulations would be applied to monopoly behavior by operators in the common carriage category, although that category itself was no longer clearly defined because the unregulated computer industry was by now incorporated into it.

Careful analysis of the Computer Inquiries and related policy activity would take up more space than this entire book, such is the sheer volume of documentation and the twists and turns of the argumentation. Nevertheless, the orthodoxy settles around the economic considerations. According to Cannon the driving force behind the Computer Inquiries was clear:

> ...the Computer Inquiries are consistently concerned about markets. The data processing market is highly competitive and innovative and demonstrates no need for regulation. The data processing market, however, is dependent upon the communications market. The communications companies are both a bottleneck supplier of services and a competitor in the data processing market.[45]

The market solution drove the Inquiries and with each set of policies came a renewed flood of economic activity, much like an inevitable sea of Manifest Destiny. The refinement of the laws tried to match the rise of new technologies, creating the Layered Model of Regulation, where the FCC left as much of the action to the innovators in the computer industry and their new allies in the Regional Bell Operating Companies. The assumption was that the unregulated market would look after itself in some kind of Darwinian moment of competitive greatness, while the FCC would look after the people who wanted to use the telephone. The complexities of the communication system amplified what became multiple and parallel markets oper-

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43.FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, Para 50.

44.FCC (1985) Third Computer Inquiry, August 20, Para 158. "We continue to believe that the nation's telephone network, even in the post-divestiture environment, remains one of the nation's most valuable and most underutilized resources. The local loops that connect the nation into an increasingly sophisticated network have the special ability to bring diverse and exciting services and benefits to the American public. Conversely, artificial limitations on the capabilities of these loops can deny broad sectors of the public these services."

45.Cannon, Robert (2003) The Legacy of the Federal Communication Commission's Computer Inquiries: 80. URL www.law.indiana.edu/fclj/pubc/v55/no/cannon.pdf

ating within each layer. The layers emerged as market segments and with them diverse regulatory responsibilities, which included removing regulations from any area that may have been enhanced by computerization.

> Thus, by conceptualizing the policy as layers, the analyst is enabled to identify markets, clarify issues, create boundary regulations that are effective, and, in so doing, target solutions where issues reside without interfering with other industries and opportunities. The Layered Model is a market policy mapped onto a technical conception.[46]

At this point in telecommunication history, economists took over the field of regulation and its conceptualization, leaving social policy as a poor cousin of the real game. Each layer became, as I discovered when working for Gartner, a segment with almost infinitely differentiated product lines. Many of my Gartner telecommunication consulting colleagues spent hours calculating how much of what sectors of which population would use what kind of communication service, all with the purpose of generating speculative amounts of revenue. The questions became one of scale – how small could the layer become in order to create an economic incentive for new entrepreneurial players in the telecommunications market and thus what thresholds could be established to facilitate "creative destruction." Cultural and social policy issues were and have remained the poor relation of economy, technology and the law. The implications have been profound. Neoclassical economists have dominated the terrain arguing that the market provides solutions to everything. Fortunately, institutional economics, with its heterodox approach to policy making did not accept the foundational ideas of neoclassical economists and their lawyer cronies who populated the FCC and public policy making organizations. Nevertheless, the orientation shifted to econometrics - the orthodoxy of mathematical quantification of economic value - and with it a new positivist ideology came to dominate what had been the world of public interest telecommunications. Not even a stated commitment by the FCC to universal service could halt the inevitability of economic value in the privatization era: every activity was commodified, monetized, codified, and rendered through the lens of exchange value. Use value was the means to that end. It was evaluated by law makers, economists and regulators whose "liberalization bias" produced the widely held view that competition would improve consumer welfare and support telecommunications-intensive industries in the information society / knowledge economy.[47] Inevitably, the growth of the economic-legal fraternity around liberalization brought about a system of economic theory that dominated the development of the Internet, leaving the public interest pretty well on the sidelines, like a poor cousin, waiting for the realiz-

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46. Cannon Robert (2003) "For example, the physical network layer (common carrier regulation, spectrum policy, cable franchises) is differentiated from the logical layer (open access, peering) which is in turn differentiated from the content layer (intellectual property, gambling, taxation, libel):" 195.

47. Frieden, Rob (2001) Managing Internet-Driven Change in International Telecommunications. Boston: Artech House: 28.

ation of limitless opportunity that never arrived.[48] What arrived was clarification through public policy of the relationship between computer innovation, business and the response to human needs for communication within the economy of the signal.

Layering media proliferation

Telephony was not the only game in town. To complicate matters, as the proliferation of digital sources multiplied through the layering of enhanced telecommunication services, cable television systems grew as well. This long standing market-based system added to the proliferation of content and added another layer to the narrative of the economy of the signal.

Just like contemporary telephony, cable television has a prehistory that indicates how the flow of unregulated content or proletarianization is part of the gradualization process of liberalization. The articulation of cable with proletarianization was not originally conceived that way. As we saw with the emergence of computer empowerment within previously regulated telephony, the unintended consequences of market driven expansion were not planned. This is partly to do with the growth of post-World War 2 affluence in the USA which accompanied the rapid growth of communications technologies that emerged out of the US military-industrial complex and the accompanying public demand for entertainment, based on the popularity of television. Given this context, cable television developed in the late 1940s for remote areas where terrestrial television signals could not reach and by the 1950s 14,000 homes were served in 70 communities. Consistent growth continued. By 1998 there were 10,700 cable *systems* serving 65 million subscribers in 32,000 communities in every state in the US. By this time the technology or aspects of it has been exported to 12 other nations in a move that set the ground work for the intensification of global media circulation.[49]

Various forms of regulation have been applied to cable television since its introduction, the most noteworthy being the 1984 Cable Act that established a regulatory management system, with significant changes in 1992 on the way to the 1996 Telecommunication Act which sought to manage the way cable and telephone would converge in the digital domain. The FCC tells the story.

> In adopting the 1992 Cable Act, *Congress stated that it wanted to promote the availability of diverse views and information, to rely on the marketplace* to the maximum extent possible to achieve that availability, to ensure cable operators continue to expand their capacity and program offerings, to ensure cable

48. Champlin, Dell (1999) "Social capital and the privatization of public goods." International Journal of Social Economics, Vol. 26, Nos. 10 / 11: 1302-1314.

49. Cable Television Information Bulletin, (2000) FCC Fact Sheet, June. URL http://www.fcc.gov/mb/facts/csgen.html, Accessed June 22, 2009.

> operators do not have undue market power, and to ensure consumer interests are protected in the receipt of cable service. The Commission has adopted regulations to implement these goals (emphasis added).[50]

FCC policy shifts incorporated a commitment to market based information flows. This tenet of the policies led to unintended consequences because the economic imperatives could only be sustained in relation to the promotion of new services, or what the FCC referred to as "diverse views" (above). This definition of media diversity drove the enormous maw of American entrepreneurialism towards the openness of the Internet. Indeed, looking at the incremental polices that unfolded though the Computer Inquiries and then in combination with cable television, there is inevitability about the 1996 Telecommunications Act's commitment to remove regulations in favor of unregulated computer services that used regulated voice transport systems. Yet even this duality of systems was hardly helpful by the time The Act came into affect on February 8, 1996. For example, Section 653, "Establishment of Open Video Systems" assumed that telephone services would be carried on a cable system along with video and television programming. Indeed, an earlier law which "banned" telephone companies from providing cable televisions was "repealed" in The Act, making it clear how massive the groundswell of digital facilitation had become.[51] As part of this groundswell, Multichannel Video Programming Distributors gained recognition, with their focus of concern being consumers.[52] This established the standard for the commercial activities that we now know as the Internet. And while all regulations passed through the grid of Title 2 regulations (voice telephony) this was something of a fraud, because those regulations themselves were open to interpretations that did not reflect the new meaning around the diminishing public interest regulations in the Internet era.

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50. Cable Television Information Bulletin, FCC, above.

51. FCC, Telecommunications Act of 1996, Section 653. http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/tcom1996.pdf, Accessed 2 December 2009.

52. SEC. 629. Competitive Availability Of Navigation Devices. (A) Commercial Consumer Availability Of Equipment Used To Access Services Provided By Multichannel Video Programming Distributors.
The Commission shall, in consultation with appropriate industry standard-setting organizations, adopt regulations to assure the commercial availability, to consumers of multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, of converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment used by consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, from manufacturers, retailers, and other vendors not affiliated with any multichannel video programming distributor. Such regulations shall not prohibit any multichannel video programming distributor from also offering converter boxes, interactive communications equipment, and other equipment used by consumers to access multichannel video programming and other services offered over multichannel video programming systems, to consumers, if the system operator's charges to consumers for such devices and equipment are separately stated and not subsidized by charges for any such service.

The litmus test as far as legislators and regulators were concerned was the entrepreneurial spirit that was incorporated into The Act. Telecommunication providers of all persuasions - incumbent (wire line) voice operators, RBOCs, new operators, cable companies, satellite companies - were all incorporated into what were referred to as "interconnection obligations" with the new open video systems.[53] Part 2 of the Act (section 251) went further, making the point with the section title: "Development of Competitive Markets - Interconnection." All the pieces of the system became "the network." Convergence brought all the pieces together in the digital space as it were, while the potential for innovation-infused business growth in the telecommunications layers pushed them apart.

The one point around which the market had to negotiate was the public interest principle of "universal service." In 1996, it stood as a reminder of the ideals of a national telecommunications system that had once incorporated core principles of social justice into a New Deal vision. In fact, The Act's "Universal Service Principles" was one of the tiny points of light that insisted on the continuation of regulation as social policy, thereby pushing back against free market interests. As with all policy documents the language indicated a last ditch commitment to regulatory priorities. Under subject heading one, "Quality and Rates," the principle was that "Quality services should be available at just, reasonable, and affordable rates," while under subject heading two, "Access and Advanced Services," they were to "be provided in all regions of the Nation."[54] On one hand universal service was reconceived as a government mandated solution, while on the other universal service was redefined as the universalization of the market. Universal service was no longer about the social policy of connecting human beings for vocal interactions, it was the vehicle with which to leverage open the telecommunications market. Economically, this was how growth could be managed.

Major issues centered around two nodes of activity after the introduction of The 1996 Act: video content regulation and telecommunications competition. In the former the FCC found that the public interest gained traction through the way universal service was linked with "the family." Here, child protection laws became a battleground about privatization and the public. For its part, competition was about explicitly privatizing deal making among the freshly minted entrepreneurs who put financial air into the Internet bubble. In fact, as an exercise in capitalism's rush to speculative riches, the Internet bubble indicated that the FCC acted as it needed to, not as Gerald Brock claimed "in a fog of great uncertainty over the state of the world and the effect of any particular policy instrument on desired

53. FCC, Telecommunications Act of 1996, Sec. 651 4 (B). http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/tcom1996.pdf, Accessed 2 December 2009.

54. FCC, Telecommunications Act of 1996, Sec. 254. http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/tcom1996.pdf, Accessed 2 December 2009.

outcomes."[55] In fact, the law was consistently shifting in line with a set of privatizing priorities that had moved out of the fog and into the clear blue sky of speculation in the digital future. Nothing could stop the Internet and its promoters whose economic priorities were simultaneously given added emotional value in US culture through the rise of fundamentalist Christian evangelicals who preached the virtues of the "spiritual marketplace."[56] It is not too much to suggest that the concepts of layering, regulation, deregulation, reregulation, free market competition, and universal service had resolved bottlenecks to economic activity while creating direct conflict with the conservative cultural shift to make the family the central locus of social life (around the television), as I will show in the next section.

The 1996 Act signaled that the Internet was crucial to the ambitions of a culture that had been constructed to articulate with technology. It was a linkage of teleological ambitions described by business historian Larry Schweikart as "a natural progression."[57] Whether nature had a role is highly doubtful, yet the ideal was reinforced in 1996 when President Clinton pronounced that "the era of big government is over," (he should have added the era of the new digital entrepreneur had arrived).

Never could this be more possible than with the then unknown characteristics of "the virtual." The Act was almost messianic in its expectations:

1. These services offer users a great degree of control over the information that they receive, as well as the potential for even greater control in the future as technology develops.
2. The Internet and other interactive computer services offer a forum for a true diversity of political discourse, unique opportunities for cultural development, and myriad avenues for intellectual activity.
3. The Internet and other interactive computer services have flourished, to the benefit of all Americans, with a minimum of government regulation.
4. Increasingly Americans are relying on interactive media for a variety of political, educational, cultural, and entertainment services.[58]

Ambition is one thing, naïve belief in open video systems to deliver these and similar attributes is another. Balancing both was the challenge for the FCC in a rapidly changing context. The digital infrastructure was a global phenomenon, not restricted to the US. Contrast this with what can be seen

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55. Brock, G. (1994) Telecommunication Policy for the Information Age. Cambridge MA., and London: Harvard University Press: 288

56. Thomas, Pradip (2009) "Selling God / saving souls: religious commodities, spiritual markets and the media." Global Media and Communication, Vol. 5, No. 1: 57-76 (62).

57. Schweikart, Larry (2000) The Entrepreneurial Adventure: A History of Business in the United States. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers: 403.

58. FCC, Telecommunications Act of 1996, Sec. 230. Protection For Private Blocking And Screening Of Offensive Material. (A) Findings. http://www.fcc.gov/Reports/tcom1996.pdf, Accessed 3 December 2009.

as the myopia of US reformers who would soon realize just what "open" meant: the circulation of fundamentalism of every persuasion. The FCC and the telecommunication entrepreneurs who used government sponsored privatization to grow the information economy through computerization's incorporation into the public network were willfully blind to questions of content despite their stated claims to "true diversity of political discourse" in Section 230, number 3, cited above. Truth claims about global issues or the specifics of public interest were subservient to the steady drip of economism. Bill Clinton's new media advisor Ira Magaziner summed it up in 1997:"If there's ever an arena that should be market driven, this is it."[59] The market displaced universal service, even while universal service remained an under theorized public policy reference point for the public interest.[60] Economy moved into its dominant place in policy making and packaged with it came an ideal for an Internet that had been economically privatized for more social-yet-private consumption: a tool that enhanced the life of the individual. In contrast, the imagined collective became an agglomeration of unseen monitor jocks, invoked by US policy makers in a continuation of the appeal to American individualism. The result, suggested Jaron Lanier, was a view that believed that "an individual best achieves optimal stupidity" in those communicative environments "when one is both given substantial powers and insulated from the results of his or her actions."[61]

Hysterical Style: the unimagined community

It is arguable yet true that US culture became characterized by a hysterical style of political discourse in April 1975, when a comatose and possibly brain dead Karen Ann Quinlan became a cause célèbre. What separated Quinlan's cause from every other hysteria were the newly defined rights associated with the human body and the intense media campaign around her life and death. It was a case where the new right to life movement became part of a set of multiple articulations that started with saturation media coverage around medical science and its practice and spread like a virus to children, the Catholic Church, then State and Federal Governments. Quinlan was on life support after taking Valium with alcohol during a night out with friends. She had collapsed and was considered incapable of sustaining herself by ar-

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59. Broder, John (1997) "Man Behind Doomed Health Plan Wants Minimal regulation of Net." The New York Times "Cybertimes," Accessed 30 June 1997. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/30/business/ira-magaziner-argues-for-minimal-internet regulation.html?scp=1sq=Broder%2C+30+June+1997&st=nyt

60. Garnham, Nicholas (1997) "Universal Service." In (Ed) W. Melody, Telecom Reform: Principles, Policies and Regulatory Reform. Lyngby: Technical University of Denmark: 207-212.

61. Lanier, Jaron, (2007) "Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism." In (Ed.) Steven Levy, The Best Technology Writing, 2007. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press: 331-349 (344).

tificial means. Her parents and local priest wanted the respirator that kept her alive removed and her doctors refused. It became the moment in which "a newly configured political landscape" emerged where people screamed at each other mostly through mediated communications.[62]

This hysteria - where people screamed at each other through and about the media - found another moment around the 1996 Telecommunications Act, when all manner of rights were reconfigured in line with the fragmented nature of postmodern telecommunications. In fact, the emergence of the "sovereign citizen vision" embodied rights like never before, where claims to community and civic life matched the Internet's mobilization of corporate interests. This "social action spectrum" brought out "a new civil rights agenda" that included "the right to speak, to information, to service, to economic opportunity, privacy and 'meaningful participation in the political process'," as Patricia Aufderheide summarized it.[63] Almost overnight it was possible to not only imagine, but to actively engage around communities of interest that were magnified through the Internet. Public policy wittingly mobilized what had previously been imagined communities into virtual communities, empowered by highly motivated entrepreneurial interests.

Generally, the best known conception of imagined communities stems from Benedict Anderson who argued that popular literacy created national cultures within "print capitalism:" an argument somewhat in line with the Canadian Communication School of Harold Innis.[64] Anderson's imagined moment came with the arrival of Martin Luther's theology of "free will" which liberated people from the stultifying institutions of the Roman church because the printing press made it possible to circulate his theses on the subject of human liberation: although as the novel *Q* shows, Luther himself was hardly much of a step up from the German tyrants of that era.[65] As the dominant "interlinked certainties" of culture declined suggested Anderson, modern civilization entered a new quest for a sense of "fraternity, power and time".[66] As we saw in Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (continuing the grand German tradition initiated by Luther perhaps), technology introduced notions of connectedness that displaced previous concepts of authority. For Benjamin, technology offered the possibility for "free will" that would bring democratic flowering in both imagined and material communities.

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62. Lapore, Jill (2009) "The Politics of Death." The New Yorker, November 30: 60 – 67 (62).

63. Aufderheide, Patricia (1999) Communications Policy and the Public Interest: The Telecommunications Act of 1996. New York, London: Guilford Press: 107.

64. Anderson, Benedict (1996) Imagined Communities, revised edition. London, New York: Verso: 36.

65. Blissett, Luther (2005) Q. Orlando: A Harvest Book.

66. Anderson, Benedict (1996) Imagined Communities, revised edition. London, New York: Verso: 36.

In contrast, imagined virtual communities aggregating around the government sponsored Internet took free will to another plane entirely – to the level of interconnected yet fragmented rights. It was within these legal rights that communities of interest were formed and became the foundation for hysterical policy activism, reaction and argumentation. US public policy makers did not anticipate the extent of this hysteria which stretched far and wide, although as we will see, they did recognize the emergence of conservative social movements and appeased them in the Telecommunications Act. Furthermore, the hysteria that applied to the Internet's entrepreneurial business community was the manifestation of a unique style of extreme social and economic behavior that was characterized by an obsession with material gain without respect for truth, decency or civility, as the Texas-based Enron showed. Would the Internet bubble have occurred if the hysteria for quick economic gain had not been articulated with a rights-based culture of entitlement to free speech? In downgrading universal services and the public interest, public policy re-invoked the national ideology of fast money and even faster ideas and with it Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan's comment about the "irrational exuberance" of the bubble.[67] More importantly for my purposes, public policy unwittingly or not, introduced the conditions in which proletarianization could flourish - *the unimagined community*.

The FCC foresaw part of this unimagined community through the limited lens of the powerful family rights movement that converged with the right to life organization after Karen Ann Quinlan. The 1996 Act included strong statements that attempted to forestall the rise and circulation of new media content, at least superficially. There was remarkable prescience in writing into the Act "Title V Sec. 501-Obscenity and Violence Subtitle A - Obscene, Harassing, And Wrongful Utilization Of Telecommunications Facilities," which maintained a public interest concern for the treatment of individuals. Section 505, "Scrambling of sexually explicit adult video service programming," while Section 509 "Online family empowerment" identified anticipated but unknown possibilities. Furthermore, the third policy statement in Section 230 of The Act committed the FCC "to encourage the development of technologies which maximize user control over what information is received by individuals, families, and schools who use the Internet and other interactive computer services."[68] The cast for a new kind of family-oriented control over personal utilization of the Internet was codified and reinforced with these statements, reflecting the determination of particular interests to a "sovereign citizen vision," as noted earlier. The precise nature of this vision of citizenship was circumscribed by statements like those in Section 501 and 320 above that drew on new meanings of how the individual would interact with the Internet while the long shadow of

67.Schiller, Robert J. (2006) Irrational Exuberance. New York: Currency/Random House.

68.FCC, Telecommunications Act, 1996. Accesed 5 December 2009.

commerce produced a ready-made understanding of what citizenship meant when ideas about the individual were bound up with the computer industry: a profit centre in every community of interest, even the unimagined communities.

Policy makers correctly theorized in their persuasive and predictive models of computer industry growth projections that the business side of liberalization would create financial proliferation based on a culture of "opportunism" – although they chose not to characterize naked American capitalism set free on microprocessors in this way.[69] They deployed the theory of self-interest, which maintains that individuals care only about how "personally beneficial" a policy is, rather than the relevance of public interest standards. Once the act went into affect there was no telling what would happen to the sector that had been set free from public scrutiny.[70]Consequently, the emergence of a hysterical style of citizen action was born as the Internet offered a vision of individual potentialities within an unscrutinized and unregulated computer industry. Entrepreneurs could realize their potential outside the public interest and citizens could realize theirs as well.

Activism quickly shifted to the courts, as it always does in the US system of public disputation. Dozens of court cases reflecting the new hysteria were brought by citizen pressure groups attempting to resolve questions about the newly unregulated world of the Internet and telecommunications itself. They can be categorized within Internet bubble hysteria as:

- family rights hysteria
- free speech rights hysteria
- business rights hysteria.

For its part, Internet bubble hysteria was publicly constructed as an expression of American exceptionalism and thus a right-once-removed from everyday citizenship sovereignty. These three rights were wed to the newly created concept of citizenship where fresh meanings of value created a mediated public sphere both "intimate" and monetized.[71] This was a major shift which, as we will observe in the chapter on pornography, produced an entirely new modality of intimacy that has become commonplace.

Before getting to the current situation, it is worth identifying the type of cases that were brought by the American Civil Liberties Union that went to the Supreme Court. The cases claimed that citizenship had been redefined in the 1996 Act, with restrictions on citizen speech rights. On the contrary, the family rights movement brought legal claims against too many liberties that threatened the family.

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69. Brock, Gerald (1994) Telecommunication Policy for the Information Age. Cambridge MA., and London: Harvard University Press: 43.

70. Brock, Gerald (1994) Telecommunication Policy for the Information Age. Cambridge MA., and London: Harvard University Press: 43

71. Berlant, Lauren (1997) The Queen of America Goes to Washington: Essays on Sex and Citizenship. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

The most obvious claim was the Communications Decency Act (1996). It became the cause célèbre for hysteria about children, pornography and the Internet and pretty much any other video media form and its content. The case speedily moved to the Supreme Court where it was rejected as a government-sponsored effort to reduce free speech by the Justices. Transmitting obscenity and child pornography was already illegal when the CDA was proposed, and it was effectively argued that an imposition of legal controls was unconstitutional under the First Amendment.[72] The failure of the CDA did not mean the end of a programmatic approach to protecting children, instead it served to more sharply determine a sense of panic amongst large numbers of people for whom the Internet, and for many, even the media itself – such as television – was a secular, dangerous force intentionally aimed at the Christian family unit. Nothing that had been done by the Federal Government to assuage the rise of hysteria by parents and their political collaborators could undo the changing emotional tone of the society. The issue was defined as protection of children from the Internet, even while the Internet was presented as a new means of mobilizing communities of interest. It was the unimagined communities (in this case, Christians in a secular world) that caused the most hysteria.

If the 1996 Telecommunications Act and the Communications Decency Act presaged the rise of hysterical disputes over the impact of the unregulated sector converging with the regulated common carrier sector, it could not have succeeded more than the follow up legislation. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) was signed into law by President Clinton on February 12, 1998. Somewhat counterintuitively, the DCMA marked a new kind of regulation – one based on the market hysteria offered by the unfettered ownership and control of digital property. If this seems contradictory it is. Total freedom from public interest regulation produced a sort of reinvention of market-based free will. Furthermore, a new sense of global interaction was enacted within the law with corporate interests clearly front and center. This can now be seen as a neoliberal style of regulatory capture, where vested interests were permitted to make the rules in line with the unregulated computer industry approach. The DMCA was a consequence of globalization manifesting itself in the new "international digital networked infrastructure."[73]

If the US was to be a player in a world of digital value, it appeared as if suddenly it had to go in supplication to global policy making bodies and submit its own claims for membership of the new digital global enterprise. The DCMA made it clear that in order to be a global citizen, US law had to be in alignment with the treaty obligations that had been signed by suc-

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72. US Supreme Court, Reno, Attorney General of the United States, et al. v. American Civil Liberties Union et. al. Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, No. 96-511.

73. Breen, Marcus (2009) "Digital Determinism: culture industries in the USA - Australia Free Trade Agreement," New Media and Society, Vol. 12 (4): 657- 676.

cessive US governments as part of a long history of international trade treaties. The latest iterations of the claim to global citizenship included imperatives to get the digital ducks in a row. Thus the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) can be linked directly to a cause and effect theory for the new regulatory system that explicitly gave predominance to the global management systems that operate today.[74] And while the "contradictions between the old and the new network governance regimes" appeared in need of resolution, the fact remains that global reach was the goal.[75] In fact, no company with global ambitions considered single nation activity adequate to its interests. As a result of The Act the global digital ownership rights movement found its voice in the CDMA. Saskia Sassen and Robert Latham summarized this shift somewhat benignly when they said that we are "seeing the transnationalizing of a growing range of local or national relations or domains as well as the formation of new ones. Such transformations enable nonstate actors to enter international arenas once exclusive to states and the formal interstate system."[76] The CMDA was dramatic in this rearrangement. It gave away American sovereignty while opening itself to unregulated digital flows in an extraterritorial reorientation. The inherent contradiction is clear – although there was an appeal to unregulated digital flows, the World Information Property Organization and the World Trade Organization established global regulations that attacked and at times removed whatever exclusive national regulations still existed. Within these changes, transnationalizing forces realized their aims to become the dominant active agents in the new entrepreneurial environment of the Internet.

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74. DMCA (1997, July 29) HR2281, WIPO Copyright Treaties Implementation Act, Section 1201, Circumvention of copyright protection system, (a) Violations Regarding Circumvention Of Technological Protection Measures- (1) No person shall circumvent a technological protection measure that effectively controls access to a work protected under this title.
(2) No person shall manufacture, import, offer to the public, provide or otherwise traffic in any technology, product, service, device, component, or part thereof that--
(A) is primarily designed or produced for the purpose of circumventing a technological protection measure that effectively controls access to a work protected under this title;
(B) has only limited commercially significant purpose or use other than to circumvent a technological protection measure that effectively controls access to a work protected under this title; or
(C) is marketed by that person or another acting in concert with that person for use in circumventing a technological protection measure that effectively controls access to a work protected under this title.

75. Mansell, Robin (1996) "Network Governance." In (Eds) R. Mansell and R. Silverstone, Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Design. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 187-212 (210).

76. Latham, R, and Sassen, S. (2005) Digital Formations: IT and New Architectures. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 3.

These forces created an additional layer of hysteria that expressed itself as fear of non-American culture. At a formal level the challenge was expressed by Richard Spinello, when he characterized the Internet as "a permissive environment with corrupting influences, but it is also a liberating place without boundaries and without fences."[77] The rise of outspoken, politically organized fundamentalist Christian conservatives in the US and in the west generally, emerged out of the palpable anxiety about foreignness and reinforced a nationalist Protestantism in the US that was soon matched and in some cases trumped by other denominational fundamentalisms. It took several more years for the likes of the Family Research Council and its Republican Party allies to make the most of the hysteria of the "threat" of the Internet while logging on themselves to create a continuing moment of binary activism: fear of foreign non-Christians and confidence in the struggle for a theocratic nation. As Kevin Philips reported, during the George W. Bush Presidency, as many as 15 state Republican Parties endorsed "Christian nation" platforms that "set out in varying degrees the radical political theology of the Christian Reconstructionist movement, ranging from the Bible as the basis for domestic law to an emphasis on religious schools and women's subordination to men."[78]

In the meantime the most elaborate critique of what became corporate facilitation of individual liberty through the combined might of the Internet policy of the 1996 Act and the DMCA came from unlikely sources.The best known of the anti-corporatist opponents was former Republican Lawrence Lessig and a cohort of Ivy League lawyers and libertarian acolytes.Their opposition to Internet public policy privatizing public rights and restricting free and fair use along with massive corporate ownership ploys to control culture through Intellectual Property law was mobilized in the "code," which was also the title of Lessig's 1999 book.[79] To all intents and purposes what Lessig and friends saw was a government plan to allow the Internet to be managed following a dubious alliance of state and corporate interests which was overseen by a legal system incapable of understanding the dramatic changes the Internet embodied. Lessig's position was well thought out from a legal perspective and he was most effective in helping to mobilize the Free Culture Movement. He was also influential in challenging some of the public policy decisions which unfortunately did little to push back corporate ownership interests. At least one major policy initiative that could be seen as a success stemming from his leadership was the 2009 open access mandate, known as the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Cen-

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77.Spinello, Richard (2002) Regulating Cyberspace: The Policies and Technologies of Control. Westport Connecticut: Quorum Books: 141.

78.Philips, Kevin, (2006) "Theocrats and Theocons." Democratic Underground.com, Accessed December 4, 2009 http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=103x204367

79. Lessig, Lawrence, (1999) Code and other laws of cyberspace. New York: Basic Books.

tral Database. This law made all publicly funded research from the National Institute of Health free to the worldwide research community through the Internet.[80]

It was however, a naïve effort. Lessig imagined the Internet in an instrumental way – digital technology would free up the existing communication system to offer a cornucopia of creative stuff in cyberspace. Lessig's contribution to the rise of the digital cornucopia view cannot be underestimated. The significance of his contribution was in his legal parsing of large numbers of US and occasionally international court cases with a legal, academic and activist eye. His work as a public intellectual identified the liberalization / privatization agenda as it wound its way through the courts. His approach was affective in public debate and Lessig kept his eye firmly on the legal ball through the late 1990s and well into the 2000s. His core idea was that there are three constituencies where the Internet has been overwhelmed and disabled by vested interests: the limits of the courts and their ability to manage public freedoms; the limitation of legislatures and thirdly "the limits to our thinking about code."[81]

Lessig's contribution to public policy reform - and resistance to it - had less to do with the constraints on innovation incorporated within the CMDA, Intellectual property law and copyright and more to do with his own sense of hysteria arising from his misunderstanding of capitalism's instincts. His opposition to the reimagined legal framework that gave corporate law almost unfettered domination of the Internet was built on his belief that digital code would determine the totality of human potential. He had little to say about capitalism as an evolutionary system of domination and even less to say about ideology. The Lessig cause was a liberal claim to reproducing opportunities for distributed economic and social opportunity within the mainstream American model of entrepreneurial capitalism. The hysteria he produced expressed the limited imagination of liberal democracy. There was nothing wrong with this position given that it was merely a claim to sustain the status quo in cyberspace. Without this resistance, the Internet offered corporate America the opportunity to remove itself from any regulations that would limit its self-interest. For regulatory liberals like Lessig, removing the certainty of the established method of the legal system was going too far. The foundations of Intellectual Property Rights and private ownership were not questioned, while communications that were owned by new elites in established corporate behemoths trampled on the mythology of rights that are fundamental to American legal ideals and the cultural mythology of opportunity for all.

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80. Baker, Gavin (2009) "You bought it, you should own it." In (Eds) J. Moreno and R. Weiss, Science Next. New York: Bellevue Literary Press: 213-215.

81. Lessig, Lawrence (1999) Code and other laws of cyberspace. New York: Basic Books: 213.

This policy hysteria continued and gained significant momentum for several reasons: Lessig's history of high level achievement (he had taught at Harvard and Princeton Universities and clerked in the US Supreme Court for the radical conservative state's rights and activist Catholic, Justice Antonin Scalia, and the conservative Chicago School economist, Judge Richard Posner); his urbane yet forceful personal presentation of the argument that the Internet incorporated a dominant code that reduced the possibility of creative potential for information and creativity; his early adoption of electronic communications such as the world wide web and blogging to publicize his opinions; his credible legal research which was published to wide acclaim; his passionate commitment to connect with the community of open source and open culture activists who supported his claims and bought into the hysteria about the end of entrepreneurial opportunity. His arguments against the CDMA and corporate ownership and control of the Internet were somewhat shrill and intellectually truncated, proving to be out of line with the economic theory of information economy – monetize every transaction. His efforts to maintain uninhibited information flows within the network could not imagine a less orderly style of cultural flow because ultimately, he sought to reproduce the "grand illusion of liberal democracy."[82]

Lessig's hysteria expressed the inability of some legal critics to understand the vision of the unregulated computer industry laid over a global telecommunication infrastructure. These new alignments were a field that brought private ownership into a screaming alliance with new cultural markets where eyeballs, privatization and entrepreneurship became the volatile, most sought after agglomeration. Seen in this light, it was no surprise that Lessig exhausted his cause by 2008, when he announced with fanfare to the free culture community, his colleagues, students, lawyers and followers that he was moving to another type of public policy advocacy against "institutional corruption."[83]

The Lessig example also indicates how public policy could produce a style of hysteria that was the product of its own limited world view. In Lessig's case, his coherent arguments were limited by the limits of his legal framework. He believed in the tradition of institutional economics – Commons no less, although there's no evidence that Lessig read institutional economics or Commons or Veblen – that there was a collective set of interests that the law should express. For example, his claim that, "for the most part we believe that there are collective values that ought to regulate private action. We are also committed to the idea that collective values should regulate the emerging technical world," were unsustainable in the

82. Hides, Shaun (2006) "Knowledge / Information: An Internet Symtomology." In (Eds) K. Sarikakis and D. Thussu, Cresskill: IAMCR, and Hampton Press: 79-98 (93).

83.See http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/people/llessig, Accessed 22 December 2009.

Internet era.[84] He was, as Cass Sunstein suggested, offering a set of precautionary principles to establish a rational approach to regulation. Such an approach, argued Sunstein is "incoherent" because "it purports to give guidance, but it fails to do so, because it condemns the very steps that it requires."[85] Even more than this, Lessig essentialized legal and legislative systems as a solution to corporate constraint of the Internet.

For Lessig, the law was everything, as he had been taught in the best law schools in the US. More importantly, when he clerked for Judge Richard Posner, he imbibed, one imagines, the free market view of the Chicago School of economics which brought free-market philosophy to the court room in the "law and economics movement," which argued that "enforcing economic efficiency ought to be the primary goal of judges."[86] Unsurprisingly, the social formations that flourished in a postmodern communications context were beyond the boundaries of Lessig's perspective which sought to have a layer of law override the chaos and irrationality of the global market and its culture. Inadvertently I am sure, Lessig's efforts served to enhance the law and economy movement's goal of removing parliamentary debate from the discourse, while the courts took up questions of the market. In effect, by heightening the value of litigation in the courts, another force field for privatization was added to the process of circumventing the public interest. And yet, the Internet's new formations introduced the unimagined community of new entrepreneurial capitalists to liberalism's belief that public policy would manage the shift from the public interest and universal service ideals. As proletarianization became part of the reconfigured terrain across which communication moved, Lessig's response amounted to legal hysteria and as Sunstein suggested, failure to stop change.

A very short history of computer industry privatization

On May 18, 1998 the US Department of Justice and 18 States of the Union sued the Microsoft Corporation.[87] The European Commission had already sued Microsoft in 1997, with a case launched by Novell.[88] The pattern of Microsoft's competitive behavior that led to these actions produced a characteristic response from the company and are best described by Microsoft CEO Bill Gates' responses to questions at a public hearing held on August

84. Lessig, Lawrence (1999) Code and other laws of cyberspace. New York: Basic Books: 219.

85. Sunstein, Cass (2008) "Precautions and nature." Daedalus, Vol. 137, No. 2, Spring: 49 - 58 (49).

86. Cassidy, John (2010) "After the Blowup." The New Yorker, January 11: 28 - 33 (28).

87. Department of Justice vs. Microsoft Corporation. Accessed 5 January 2010 at http://www.justice.gov/atr/cases/ms_index.htm

88. Ab-Haidar, Lamia, (1997) "Microsoft investigated in Europe," October 16. Accessed 6 January 2010, at http://news.cnet.com/2100-1023_3-204317.html

27, 1998 at Microsoft's Redmond, Washington headquarters: "evasive and unresponsive."[89] The corporate direction could not have been clearer. Microsoft was asked to explain its behavior and to pretty much cease and desist bundling its software with its web browser because it was using this strategy to stop other software makers offering their products. Over many years since the antitrust cases were initiated, Microsoft chose to avoid and work around efforts to reduce its monopoly practices, continuing into December 2009.[90] The significance about this is that the institutions that led the charge against corporate malfeasance were not telecommunications oriented because, as we have seen, the FCC, Congress and "the market" had all agreed that the computer industry needed to be unregulated. So it was the Department of Justice that stepped up. In 1991 the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) had launched a short lived inquiry into Microsoft's dubious business activities, while Intel, the California-based microchip manufacturer was sued by the FTC in 1991 for its monopoly practices.[91]

Microsoft was the engine that drove the US computer industry to become not only the transformative agent in Personal Computing on a massive global scale, it was also the principle agent of the unregulated networked environment and more significantly, the epitome of competitive US business culture.It utilized an uncompromising business built on monopoly practices, willfully breaking anti-trust standards to gain domination of the installed base of computer software.Its sins have been widely documented. What has been less commented on is the way Microsoft reproduced the American ideal of discretionary free-market wheeling and dealing in the national interest.Looking at the global boom in the computer industry, the nationalist project of US economic dominance was incorporated into the unregulated world of commerce through Microsoft's business.The ideology of business for the US in the Internet bubble context was to allow the animals to run amok, untrained, and thus create a hegemonic system of communications from which the US would gain the economic and (to misquote Larry Lessing) the coded benefit.The mess, so the story seemed to go, could be cleaned up later, but not by any concern about citizen access to tariffed voice communications that would unite the country around the economy of the signal.No, the concern was about business practices that were uncompromising in their determination to crush competitors and stop the emergence of creative solutions outside of Microsoft.The pattern of monopoly

89.Kawamoto, Dawn (1998) Gates response called unresponsive." August 28, CNet News, Accessed 6 January 2010 at http://news.cnet.com/2100-1023-214993.html

90.Department of Justice, Joint Status Report on Compliance. URL accessed 5 January 2010 at http://www.justice.gov/atr/cases/f252800/252874.htm

91.Swindle, Orson, (1999) "What are we learning from the Microsoft Case," Speech, September 30, Accessed January 5, 2010 at http://www.ftc.gov/speeches/swindle/federalist990930.shtm

behavior continued in the computing industry and re-emerged in 2009 when the US Government sued Intel again for its anti-competitive behavior. Then the EU dropped its case against Microsoft.

The time factor is instructive. More than 10 years of legal wrangling, cases layered on cases, Microsoft acknowledging that it could do something and asking for more time, or refusing to provide information, or obfuscating – all of which were little more than business strategies structured to buy Microsoft time to maintain and expand its market domination. In the meantime, and as I learned somewhat horrifyingly when I worked for Gartner, the view within the software analyst community at the end of the 1990s was that Microsoft was loathed by idealistic analysts and entrepreneurs who claimed that Microsoft's anti-competitive business tactics had held back the computer software industry for 15-20 years. After the rise of Google and related mobile technologies, that unprovable argument does indeed seem plausible.

Most of Microsoft's behavior has been and continues to be documented – this includes the highly instructive rants by Microsoft CEO Stave Ballmer, uploaded to You Tube: "I've got four words for ya – I love this company!"[92] Then there are the You Tube videos with Ballmer as Adolph Hitler (Adolf Ballmer), and the Microsoft logo as a Swastika.[93] Talk about hysteria! Ballmer, the marketing guru behind Microsoft and probably in front of Bill Gates, shows how the culture of selling, volume, domination, money and mind numbing wealth converge within an individual to reveal the kernel of industrial ambition. It is the visage of a white middle aged American male's total focus on the business prize. The commitment to crushing opponents, not just beating them on a level playing field (which did not exist anyway), is a dual attribute of contemporary American commercial culture: innovation and domination. Removing regulations on competition made it possible to be anti-competitive and started when the FCC encouraged the unregulated computer industry in the Computer Inquiries.

On another level, as I will suggest in detail in the chapter on jihadism, the anti-competitive behavior of Microsoft and Intel became a rationalization for anti-Americanism. The argument was that when liberal democracy threw up monopoly behavior it had some kind of tacit endorsement from the US Government - perhaps most profoundly through deregulation in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Under such conditions there was no reason to support the US, especially when it asserted its commitment to competition - its major innovators (Microsoft and Intel) stopped innovation in other nations and the US as well. As public discussion of Microsoft's anti-competitive behavior became commonplace through the media, re-

92."Steve Ballmer going crazy," You Tube, URL available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvsboPUjrGc

93."Adolf Ballmer," URL at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3XdOl5YtLg&feature=related, "Windows Swastika. You do it our way or not at all," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h-YsC3Ksi8&feature=related

sentment grew. What I experienced at Gartner was multiplied and inverted into anti-Americanism. The EU fed the anti-Americanism, even while it sought to promote increasingly competitive policies among European computer industry firms. The feeling was that American firms preached competition but did not practice it. The contradiction was simple enough – computer technology was individually liberating, while the US's collective and national interests opposed emancipation, unless it was delivered by a US monopoly.

Public policy with some numbers

Telecommunications policy in the US was captured by computer industry forces which conveniently used this unregulated industry to allow the common carriage obligations of the public network to be privatized beyond FCC public interest regulations. The three computer inquiries and the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the CDA, the CDMA and dozens of court cases made this clear. Furthermore, monopolistic practices by Microsoft and Intel to control supposedly competitive computer industry markets were celebrated at the everyday level of the desktop by millions, perhaps even billions of consumers and newly minted digital entrepreneurs, who quite frankly celebrated the Internet. For consumers, as long as they could afford the hardware and the monthly subscription fees offered by managed oligopolies of former common carriage firms like Verizon and AT&T and unregulated cable companies like Time Warner, it was all good innovation. The FCC Computer Inquiries realized a singular outcome: market valuation was everything.

In contrast, institutional economics helpfully contributed to an appreciation of the hollowing out of public policy making, pointing out how policy analysis in the US has been dominated by economics and its bastard offspring, econometrics. In fact, institutional economics did not and will not buy into the ideology of the exchange value accounting fetish. It refuses to allow any mathematics or econometrics in its journal, the *Journal of Economic Issues (JEI)*.[94] It could be argued that *JEI* itself is engaging in a form of hysteria by refusing to accept the hegemony of mathematics as the foundation for policy making. Yet, in the policy context where most discussion has been overtaken by obscure calculations, the democratic urge to reject the elitist calculations of esoteric economic theory should be welcomed. Whatever *JEI* does is one thing, the question however remains, how and under what conditions should the exchange value accounting fetish be jettisoned? Surely, to remove it entirely would be to fail to meet the demands set out in the opening of this chapter of understanding the full range of policy forces that brought about proletarianization through the Internet. It is necessary to be able to measure the injustice of the economy of the signal, dominated as it is by privatization. For example, we need to know that

94.Journal of Economic Issues, see for example, URL

in May 2008, 73 per cent of the US population used the Internet or email, and 55 percent used a high speed Internet connection. Of course, we need not pretend that a mathematical calculation will explain what makes it possible to purchase the hardware and the monthly service fees for high speed connection: the consistent rate of poverty and rising inequity is too obvious to require a commentary here.[95] The Pew Internet and American Life Project statistical data set that reveals the numbers for Internet access also relates use to income. There is no hysteria about this matter in the US or anywhere else for that matter: fluffy discourses about the digital divide seem to be little more than a revised form of charity. Yet there is the contradictory evidence that unregulated content, generally conceived as the product of the ill-informed, the immature, the uneducated and the poor, is pouring through the Internet. There is no end of hysteria about this.

Public policy analysis benefits from taking the long view. I have shown how the political economy of the Internet has been constructed within the struggle over liberalism itself – the conceits about how the public interest would survive in the face of the emergence of economic essentialism by policy makers who were unable to respond to the overpowering might of the computer industry and their cohort economists. The rise of citizen rights as an expression of the new media era produced multiple expressions of hysteria that signaled a shift in the culture, from regulated institutional management to unregulated economic and social activity that was couched in the language of entrepreneurship and thus mythologized as morally acceptable. Similarly, neo-liberalism preached its gospel of emancipation from regulation which masked the "market triumphalism" that took 30 years to build while destroying established ideas about the meaning of public interest linked to universal service and thus social justice.[96] At the fringes, the core of the engine were the sleazy financial dealers who successfully argued against taxation for Internet activities, including purchases over the Internet, while Venture Capitalists fought back against efforts to eliminate tax breaks for them as late as December 2009.[97] In this respect, the entire state apparatus had been convinced to deny the rationale of its own existence by removing the ability to regulate public interest through taxation. Clearly, if the Internet is seen only as an object for communication research, these issues are missed in the analysis, like the role of the computer industry's unregulated influence on common carriage telecommunications policy. Furthermore, broad analysis of the Internet puts the privatization ideology at

95. Fox, Susannah, Vitak, Jessica (2008) "Degrees of Access." Pew Internet and American Life Project, URL accessed 14 February 2009, http://www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2008/Degrees-of-Access-(May-2008-data).aspx

96. Sandel, Michael (2009), Reith Lectures 2009: "A New Citizenship, Lecture 1: Markets and Morals," Radio 4. URL accessed 19 December 2009 at http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/20090609_thereithlectures_marketsandmorals.rtf

97. Kranish, Michael (2009) "House votes to eliminate tax break for venture capitalists." The Boston Globe, December 10: A8.

the centre of public policy making analysis. Nevertheless, communication research can miscalculate the assessment of the liberal system of analysis. For example, the financial crisis of 2007-2010 was characterized as an expression of "an alternative, bizarro universe," by Paul Krugman, *The New York Times* columnist and Nobel Prize winner for economics in 2008.[98] Unlike Krugman, it is necessary to acknowledge that we are not witnessing a parallel universe at all, it is the same one he and all of us inhabit. After a generation of free market activism that established then practiced the autonomy of global transactions outside public policy regulatory considerations, Krugman's opinion provides evidence of how the economics profession cut loose core aspects of the public interest focus. In this context, collective interests collapsed with a vivified sense of freedom for individuals. The Internet was and is captured by this sense of freedom and with it the unintended consequences that make possible the intensified circulation of proletarianization.

In many respects the shifts in the policy making system were simultaneously happening around the world in democratic societies, altering the weight of meaning about the public interest while offering the riches of the global flux to a renewed sense of the individual – machines were not termed "Personal Computers" for nothing. The successful organization of the corporate interests that freed the Internet from regulation to "feed" individuals at the desk top and on mobile devices and through video cameras, can be viewed as an evolutionary shift in line with the rise of computing technology and the obsolescence of New Deal communication policy based in the public interest. It can be seen as the outcome of pragmatic liberalism that had been organized around policy making that was ill-prepared to do more than make "action-oriented recommendations for alleviating the problem."[99] In response to what I characterize as the weak "recommendation approach" – as opposed to activist intervention and instrumentalist policies – is it any wonder then that the supremacy of the US and ultimately the global computer industry produced what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as "a class of practices" within telecommunication regulatory institutions that created "a science of mercantile relationships"?[100] As institutions like the FCC became economically essentialist in their accommodation of the neo-liberalism that included global capital, with its promotion and celebration of consumerist interests, the state sponsored system of the Internet was opened, even liber-

98. Krugman, Paul (2009) "Disaster and Denial," December 13. URL accessed 15 December at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/14/opinion/14krugman.html?scp=1-&sq=krugman,%20december%2014,%202009&st=Search

99. Yannich, Danillo (2008) "Doing Policy Research: Camelot or Oz?" Making Communications Research Matter. Social Science Research Council, URL accessed 10 December, 2009 http://essays.ssrc.org/mcrm/?feed=rss2

100. Breen, Marcus (2008) "Popular Music Policy Making and the Instrumental Policy Behavior Process." Popular Music, Vol. 27, No. 2: 193-208. Boudieu, Pierre (1986) "The Forms of Capital." In (Ed) J. Richardson, Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education. New York: Greenwood: 242.

ated from regulatory structures and the public interest to become a shadow chasing past meanings.[101] What came to be is beyond any regulator.

101. Frieden, Rob (2008) "Academic Research and its Limited Impact on Telecommunications Policymaking." International Journal of Communication, No. 2: 421-428.

Part II

Unintended Consequences

Chapter 8

Fanciful Anatomy

Internet pornography and the politics of pleasure

A Global Empire of Sensations

In 1989, Linda Williams described pornography as a "frenzy of the visible."[1] Just over 20 years later, Internet pornography has generated a broader frenzy, where a global mode of social and economic behavior has created an empire of sensations. These sensations are still grounded in the visible, while deeply embedded on a massive scale in the everyday experiences of individualized production and consumption. In this chapter I want to suggest that Internet pornography is such a large new mode of experience that it warrants a reimagining of Mikhail Bakhtin's "theory of the carnival?"[2] Bakhtin's idea was that people who have no voice or place in civil society can find a place to engage in unregulated behavior in "the carnivalesque." My appropriation of Bakhtin's term remakes Williams's "frenzied visibility," arguing that the carnivalesque creates a frenzied egalitarianism that is defined by the Internet, where pornography offers unregulated sensations of a world without boundaries. To that image I add the abject, which is outside the system of the carnival as well as outside the dominant cultural assumptions of

1. Williams, Linda (1989) Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible." Los Angeles: University of California Press.

2. Bakhtin, M. (1968) Rabelais and his World. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press: 3.

upward mobility. This visible yet irrational frenzy of pleasure in the body is full of potential. It reassembles the territory that, until the time of the Internet, had been the world we all inhabit.[3] The Internet has brought the abject into the world through the monitor screen.

This newly configured world was not remotely familiar to Bakhtin. His celebration of the carnival appealed to "The Bakhtin Circle" - a group of Russian literary intellectuals from the era of the October Revolution who barely survived Stalin - who were taken with "the carnivalesque," described by Bakhtin as a "thousand year old development of the folk culture of humor."[4] The celebration of the laughter of the carnival is constructed as a ritual of equality in unregulated play. It generates an imaginary "other" social world in which emancipation is realized. This is the world of the "heteroglossia," one in which every possibility of the imagined human body from fun to the grotesque is given expression, observed and celebrated. In many ways, it instantiates the irrational expression of frenzied visibility, all the while existing within while breaking from, the rational world of civility, decency and respect.

> It could be said (with certain reservations, of course) that a person of the Middle Ages lived, as it were, two lives: one that was the official life, monolithically serious and gloomy, subjugated to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence and piety; the other was the life of the carnival square, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything. Both these lives were legitimate, but separated by strict temporal boundaries. [5]

Bakhtin's remaking of the material world through the grotesque body liberated in the carnival offers a way of thinking outside the limits of the current "episteme."[6] The grotesqueries of the body find a space in the new spatial globalization, where they become the "fanciful body" – released for all time – in death, the end of the present material constraints on human liberation.[7]

> It is the peoples' growing and ever-victorious body that is "at home" in the cosmos. It is the cosmos's own flesh and blood, possessing the same elemental force but better organized. The body is the last and best word on the cosmos, its leading force. Therefore it has nothing to fear. Death holds no terror for

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3.Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari Félix (1987) A Thousand Plateaus. New York / London: Continuum: 359-360.

4.Bakhtin, M. (1968) Rabelais and his World. Cambridge MA: MIT Press: 3-4.

5.Brandist, C. (2006) The Bakhtin Circle, The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Accessed 12 September 2008, URL at http://www.iep.utm.edu/b/bakhtin.htm#H5: 129-130.

6.Wise, John M. (1997) Exploring Technology and Social Space (New Media Cultures). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

7.Harvey, David (2001) Spaces of Capital. New York: Routledge: 372- 375. Bhaktin, M. (1968) Rabelais and His World. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.: 346.

> it. The death of the individual is only one moment in the triumphant life of the people and of mankind, a moment indispensable for their renewal and improvement.[8]

This conflation of the body with death offers a re-imagining of the value of life itself in the experiment of "the people."

Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque body was created through what Robert Stam called a relationship between the body that acts as a "membrane" where "the self and the world" are in a permanent state of osmosis ("permeable") which Bakhtin presents as a "festival of becoming, a plurality, not a closed system but a permanent experiment."[9] Such an experiment includes the entire range of life of the human organism – from procreation to birth to childhood, adulthood, old age and death. Taking this holistic view it is possible to see the grotesque and fanciful body as a permanent transformative subject, moving through the carnival in transition to collective realization.

Permanent experimentation by the body in all its celebratory manifestations is used here as a homology for Internet pornography. I want to suggest that Internet pornography offers a new "carnival" where the membrane is more permeable than ever, where the imagination is unregulated and unlimited, where material realities are laid out before us and the people's body is at the point of being realized. Before this moment (of the Internet) claims by and about Bakhtin's carnival were swept up in textual theory, where the imagined community moved into the better body of the cosmos through a kind of literary artifice. The body could move outside itself through a fantastic metaphysical claim to the "cosmos." In contrast, in the new spaces offered by Internet pornography, it is possible to imagine the body emancipated from everyday demands, grotesque in its refusal to be constrained by the social order. In this respect it is not overstating it to suggest that the Internet constitutes a new form of truth because it operates as a text which is an expression of the grotesque body, as both the laboratory of novelistic experimentation and the "real thing." In the Internet context, pornography is no longer "the junk food of the erotic imagination" because it occupies a place that is being reconstituted by emerging forces and fields of knowledge combined with lived experience.[10] The new forces include:

- individual imagination
- intensified physical sensation
- deeper psychological and social engagements
- globally massified levels of circulation
- reduced social controls through deregulation

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8. Bakhtin, M. (1968) Rabelais and his World. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press: 341

9. Stam, Robert (1989) Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 157.

10. Stam, Robert (1989) Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 167.

- degraded state management systems
- collapsed genre categories
- reduced phallocentrism
- feminist action.

The Internet offers these forces with the swarming energy of the grotesque body in the carnival, where the Internet itself is an extraordinary unregulated "carnival."[11] Combined in a complex of forces in the carnival of the Internet, these forces add up to a reimagined Bakhtinian body whose emancipatory potential is realized in the empire of sensations. In essence, it is proletarianization.

To utilize Bakhtin's theory of the carnival is to become "Bakhtin critics" and thereby "call attention to the voices at play in a text," not only those heard in aural "close up" but also those voices "dominated, distorted and drowned out by the text".[12] As I noted above, Internet pornography goes much further than "textual play" because it is a different text; it is an empire of sensations that offers a new set of interpretive meanings produced in the material world with both economic and social and personal and political consequences. For the Bakhtin critic the production and consumption of Internet pornography is a carnival of proletarianization.

Beyond Enlightenment

Internet pornography offers a new set of analytical possibilities. These possibilities result from the transgressive knowledge that circulates on the Internet in ways that unsettle previously established rational controls of culture, law and society. Transgressive knowledge challenges these constituents of social life through the circulation of Internet pornography, most profoundly through the circulation of the abject. Fundamentally, the Internet creates new contexts for pornography. It privatizes the private, while simultaneously publicizing the circulation of otherwise regulated images. It makes the monitor space a place for new pleasure as well as horror, both of which are forms of knowledge. In other words, the Internet pushes transgressive images and ideas into private places so that what was once hidden is removed from view through its private consumption on computer screens. This double move creates new modes of knowing as Internet pornography offers unfettered visual experiences of sexual intimacy. In this context privacy has been intensified and redefined around "intimate domestic or personal life including sexual life."[13] The transgressive knowledge

11. Massumi, Brian (2002) Parables for the Virtual. Durham: Duke University Press: 251.

12. Stam, Robert (1989) Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press: 19

13. Fraser, Nancy (1995) "Politics, culture and the public spheres: towards a postmodern conception." In (Eds) L.J. Nicholson and S. Seidman, Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 287-314: 292.

of Internet pornography is constituted in such a way that it reveals the way the social world is assembled.[14] In what could be called the revelation of the assemblage of the sensations of the sexualized body linked with material forces of production and consumption, proletarianization is revealed. For example, on most Internet pornography sites there is a link for users, producers and Webmasters to click to create a revenue system for their site while there is uploading capacity for people wanting to upload their own pornography videos. Consequently, the immediate and nondiscriminating characteristics of digital and pixilated video show and offer the processes of production while exposing the excesses of consumption. This approach refuses to push the conditions under which the Internet operates into the other worldy world of "the virtual" or "cyberspace" where they can be managed as if without direct connections with material considerations.

Furthermore, the Internet marks a break with bourgeois culture based on Enlightenment ideals of scientific rationality. Enlightenment culture refused to accept the illiterate knowledge of the uneducated, the peasant and the worker, establishing boundaries that were institutionalized by the state through education and professional training. As I discussed in the chapter on immaturity, this model still informs western ideas and ideals of what could be considered the culture of the pre-Internet era. In a nutshell, this is the history of liberalism and of modernism before microprocessing combined with postmodernity to rip apart established notions of collectivity and to challenge ideas about the public through the empowerment of individualized media forms such as the Internet. The Internet's focus on individual engagement through a monitor breaks with the past, removing previously established social controls, making transgressive knowledge visible, tangible in its material base of interactive production.

The characteristics of the Internet's political economy extend the frenzy of the visual to create an empire of sensations that operates as an unregulated carnival. It challenges and remakes our experience and understanding of life, it moves previously existing boundaries of power to include and extend the potential for action. The Internet offers transparency to the lives of the previously hidden plus the opportunity to utilize the Internet to produce and circulate images and ideas about unregulated sexual practices and make them our own. This complex of production and consumption further defines proletarianization in the Internet era.

Making proletarianization

To gain a richer sense of how proletarianization is expressed by Internet pornography consider the following example. Former Columbia University finance Ph.D. student Peter Acworth is an Englishman seeking riches in the virtual possibilities of Silicon Valley. His story appeared in a 2007 *New York*

14. Slack Jennifer, D and Wise John M. (2005) Culture and Technology: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang Publishing: 130.

Times magazine profile.[15] At *Kink*, Acworth's San Francisco enterprise, the computer workers and the sex workers tend to be college educated people who moved into Internet pornography as much for employment as for the opportunities to break with the established porn industry.

> You can't just throw up an adult Web site and watch the dollars roll in anymore," says Kathee Brewer, editor of the trade magazine AVN Online, which covers the online adult industry. Many of the sites that have lasted, she adds, were founded, like Kink, by serious-minded, tech-oriented entrepreneurs working outside the influence of the porn establishment.[16]

The industrial structures of pornography have changed, along with the content that cannot be regulated because the Internet is generally unregulated as a data network. Internet pornography combines and escalates a mix of human curiosity, voyeurism, modesty, criminality, public decency standards and Mob interests. For its part, *Kink* offers a range of sensational sexuality or extremes on the Internet that includes "Fucking Machines," "Water Torture," "Men in Pain," "Hogtied," "Ultimate Surrender," "Device Bondage," "Wired Pussy," "Public Disgrace," and others.[17] In the latter case, various forms of humiliation and degradation are consensually performed in public places, such a hotel bars and cafes, among people gathered in rooms where extreme sexual behavior and abuse is performed. Prior to the emergence of the Internet, sexual extremes were limited to those who were most able to pay and of course, those who were forced to submit to the humiliation of existence – those whose quest for payment and pleasure were outside the rational system of society. "Vice" was a convenient euphemism to describe the boundary that Enlightenment legislators established to police pornography. In breaking that system of rational control over pornography, the Internet has constructed a new type of "respectability" for debasement, thereby raising the question of whether abjection is becoming a standard for Internet "pleasure." This question informs the everyday availability of the pornography that Kink makes available in short videos for "free" through its website – it offers it almost outside the transactions of the market for "free" (as long as the user can pay for the hardware and connection).

As a former finance graduate student from an elite American university, Acworth mixes his English migrancy experience of the American Dream with the entrepreneurial possibilities of Silicon Valley. His enterprise has been written about in T*he New York Times* because it has financial success, which has become the benchmark of success once removed from pornography's previously regulated rational regime. Furthermore, people such as Acworth have created a new kind of political theory, namely an empire

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15.Mooallem, J. (2007) "A Disciplined Business." Accessed 2 January 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/magazine/29kink.t.html?pagewanted=all

16.Mooallen, J. (2007) "A Disciplined Business." Accessed 2 January 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/magazine/29kink.t.html?pagewanted=all

17.http://kink.com/

where "all places have been subsumed in a general 'non-place'."[18] I would add that Internet pornography adds *all experiences* to Hardt and Negri's totalizing geographical perspective of "all places." In this global empire every sensation is incorporated into the flow of experience. The industrial structures, the images and ideas about sexuality and associated knowledge of the body circulate to be assembled everywhere in a new frenzy of bodily sensations.

Businesspeople like Acworth bring neo-liberalism's open tolerance for wealth creation into alignment with a model of development that is directly articulated with modalities of sexual "pleasure" across the digital empire. Of course, it would be naïve to suggest that Internet pornography circulates only in pleasurable ways, where that pleasure is conceived within the prevailing sense of abandonment in a safe, willing, consensual and economically secure context. It also pushes the limits of human interaction and emotion into areas of experience that destroy preexisting boundaries of human knowledge to facilitate the rise of proletarianization: the exposure of human interactions that are not bound by civility, as established by Enlightenment standards.

Provocations

Kink offers viewers the opportunity to watch women have electrical charges applied to their genitals in order to observe the act. This "act" can be considered as either brutality or as pleasure, or a mix of the two. The electric sensation is presented within the known world of Bondage Discipline Sadism Masochism (BDSM), but due to its ready accessibility through "just another website" it operates as an ordinary expression of Internet activity, even though it is a depiction of graphic sexual activity intended to generate arousal as pornographic imagery. There is nothing to distinguish it from a video display of heterosexual sexual intimacy, or for that matter, the opinion pages of the *New York Times* on line. This suggests that the boundaries of the previously restricted and the impermissible have given way to proletarianization's claim to an empire of sensations, where the world of individual potential replaces a moral world of regulations. As Judith Butler has argued, the conflation of such acts – sex, pleasure, torture - cannot be considered outside of the United States military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, including water boarding and the US's ongoing war after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the invasion of Iraq and the circulation of images and debate about these topics which are about the dehumanizing treatment of Moslems.[19] This is not the place to address those specific issues in detail, yet it is necessary to keep alive that reference to the territory that Internet pornography includes, because it informs the political reality everyone

18. Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) Empire. Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 354.

19. Butler, Judith (2008) "Sexual politics, torture and secular time." The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 59 (1): 1–23.

now inhabits. This consideration points to the changed meaning for pornography itself: public disgrace happens at Kink and at Guantanomo Bay and Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq.

Unsurprisingly then, Internet pornography has produced multiple new layers of practice in the global networked context that require new theory. In terms associated with Gramscian cultural studies, it is necessary to examine the multiple articulations created by the constituents of Internet pornography, such as the relationships between sexuality, media, communications, business, class, trade, psychology, physicality, pain and pleasure. In doing so the Internet creates moral panics brought about by new media because it is a complex of new cultural and economic movements, layered over older media events and even older Enlightenment civic standards. The originally conceived process of moral panic within rock and roll for example, as established in Stanley Cohen's 1972 book, *Folk devils and moral panics: the creation of the Mods and the Rockers*, moved along the following trajectory: a new media threatens established social interests and the dominant values of a community; the threat appears in a recognizable form in the new media; public concern rapidly builds; authorities and opinion-makers respond; the panic fades or produces social change to become part of the status quo meaning making system of a society.[20] In contrast, the moral panic associated with Internet pornography moves beyond the typical space of youth culture because it is neither constrained by traditional media nor subjected to established temporalities or authorities, but continues the polyvalent challenge[21] of the relationship of the virtual with the material, generating multiple meanings, dimensions and valences.[22] It exists in virtual and private new spaces, where it is removed yet still collides with prevailing categories that seek to explain and manage it.

Moral panics can be observed in relation to Internet pornography because of the way it exposes proletarianization against established social norms. Pamela Paul for example, claims that pornography has incorporated itself into everyday life to such an extent that the culture has been "Pornified." And worse, it is *Damaging our lives, our relationship and our families* as the title of her book *Pornified* published in 2005 suggested. On closer inspection it turns out that Pamela Paul is nostalgic for a kind of American pop culture, when family friendly television situation comedies of the late 1970s like *Laverne and Shirley* defined the regulated world of the domesticated television space. For Paul, the Internet is where "A wave of porn-in-

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20. Thompson, K. (1998) Moral Panics. London: Routledge. Cited in S. Luckman, "Doof, Dance and Rave Culture." In (Eds) Mitchell, T, and Homan, S. (2008) Sounds of Then, Sounds of Now: Popular Music in Australia, Hobart: ACYS Publishing, University of Tasmania: 142.

21. Hillis, Ken (1999) Digital Sensations. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

22. McCarthy, Anna (2006) "From the Ordinary to the Concrete: Cultural Studies and the Politics of Scale." In (Eds) Mimi White and James Schwoch, Questions of Method in Cultural Studies, Malden: Blackwell Publishing: 21-53.

fused fare is putting pornography on a par with family entertainment."[23] Paul's activist nostalgia claims a manageable, regulated space for an imagined family around the domesticated television in the middle class American home. Colliding with that imagined place, Internet pornography reconfigures the social constructions of everyday life as imagined by Pamela Paul. In fact, Internet pornography intensifies the circulation of transgressive knowledge, challenging claims for a return to the domesticated televisual past and demanding analysis of the increasingly complex fields of production and consumption that reveal proletarianization. To put it another way, the damage to the domestic status quo that Pamela Paul deplores is precisely where transgressive knowledge critically operates: in and beyond the carnival drowned out by situation comedies like *Laverne and Shirley*. Where the abject once had no place in the domestic televisual and media context, their everyday lives are now in circulation and multiplying, not as I suggested earlier, as a type of class consciousness, but as an unregulated mass of knowledge and physical action surging with human potential.

Questions of Pathology

Pornography's specific purpose is and always has been to stimulate and arouse the individual who sees it, while it should not be forgotten that it is also driven by users' curiosity about the body, human behavior and human nature. Internet pornography takes the individual into the new empire of sensations because it is more personally engaging than Linda Williams suggested more than two decades ago, where dark theatres and a finite supply of film and video provided the stimulation. Internet pornography operates at a different scale of energy: it creates a private pathology that provokes insistent knowledge of the body. That is, the sexual urgency in the way it is privately consumed includes the immediacy of the knowledge that the sensation that is happening is real. The intensity moves to a higher scale because the monitor on which the pornography is offered operates in a private space, free for the most part of social constraints. New Internet pornography offers sensationalism that incorporates euphoric abandonment within the virtual world while still being defined by the pornography user's relationship to the images. The relationship of the user with Internet pornography is to produce-consume-respond physiologically to images of pleasure with pleasure. The question is whether the new intensity of this interaction has more in common with pathology – a "disease" that is beyond the otherwise commonly known scale of human behavior. My point here is that Internet pornography's pathology incorporates the sensations and ideas associated with the circulation of sexual imagery, while it also incorporates pathos: "the quality or power in an actual life experience or in

23. Paul, Pamela (2005) Pornified: Damaging our lives, our relationship and our families. New York: Times Books: 6.

literature, music, speech, or other forms of expression, of evoking a feeling of pity or compassion."[24] This is why Internet pornography engages users in powerful ways, because the novelty of its individuated use is sensational in a pathological way.

There is sporadic public discussion about "sex addiction" as a response to the ubiquity of Internet pornography and its pathological power. A considerable amount of research remains to be done to explore if "sex addiction" truly exists or if it is an extension of a moral panic, promoted (as a Google Internet word search suggests) in part by Christian churches whose members (of which I am a former member) have a troubled relationship with bodily sensations – "Pure Life Ministries," "Building Church Leaders" are clear about the relationship between sex and the evils of the body.[25] In addition, society in general shares some of these concerns because sexual addiction is viewed as being about control over sexual behavior, which is a mark of Enlightenment maturity through self-control. The solutions offered to sex addiction addresses the pathology issue because the sensations are thought to overwhelm the individuals who are considered to be "suffering." The issue then is to explore the way Internet pornography opens a window to reveal what has previously been hidden, suppressed and secret about its production and its consumption. An appreciation for the pathology involved is an additional part of the story. In fact, the intensity of Internet pornography exposes proletarianization because it makes public the private world of sexuality and the human relations and the anxieties underlying it. The Bakhtin critic sees this as the new carnival, where pathologies can be emancipated.

The Body

For men sexual arousal is defined by tumescence - the male erection - which combines arousal with the expectation of ejaculation / orgasm - and is the key marker of the phallocentrism of most pornography. In both men and women, the mobilization of arousal as a reaction to visual imagery through the monitor is related to the release in orgasm of neurotransmitters or endorphins that produce euphoric pleasure ("the runner's high") and which repeatedly calls us back for pleasure through desire. For men, endorphins appear in relation to a verifiable physical change - the erection - that defines the male sex experience and, as Luce Iregaray suggested "privileges" male

24. Dictionary.com (2010) Accessed 28 March at http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pathos

25. Sexual Addiction, Pure Life Ministries. Accessed 29 January 2010 at http://www.purelifeministries.org/free resources?gclid=CImR3cDZ3qACFctx5QodZghBBg and Sexual Addiction, Building Church Leaders, (2010) Accessed 28 March 2010 at http://www.buildingchurchleaders.com/downloads/urgentcare/pornographyandsexualaddiction/?tCode=92FFE08D0DdCode=F6CD653-B52&gclid=CMa8rvrZ3qACFQxN5QodRj2PCg

sexuality because it operates visually and visibly.[26] In line with tumescence as phallocentrism, discussions about the hegemony of "the male gaze" have been debated within film studies since Laura Mulvey's 1975 article on the subject, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."[27] However, tumescence has been altered by Internet pornography in two major ways: 1) adding to the intensity of the visual 2) generating a variety of knowledge about sexuality. Visual stimulation through the Internet intensifies the private sensation of sexuality, while adding an additional layer to phallocentrism - the male view of the world. Simultaneously, the diversity of unregulated content offers alternatives to the phallocentric male gaze.

In this sense, Internet pornography reconstructs the gaze because it intentionally stimulates the individual with an appeal to sensations that are not restrained by cinematic conventions of the visual as only male centric. For example, Kink's "Public Disgrace" is cinematically visual, yet the intention is to stage public acts of humiliation to produce sexual arousal for viewer gratification in the video monitor. This monitor now includes mobile phone screens and any other device that connects to the Internet. This marks a break with the male gaze of cinema and is part of Internet pornography's new modality. Furthermore, while the humiliation may be directed at men as an assumed audience, it can also include women and unknown individuals, small or large groups as well. This aspect of Internet pornography is increasingly complex and contradictory in what it reveals about proletarianization through the indiscriminate incorporation of all people in the contemporary global situation. To suggest otherwise would avoid accepting the challenge to comprehend the Internet's global cultural reorientation.

More radically yet, women experience the immediacy of sexual stimulation by the visual even while the reaction is less visible than for men (women do not experience tumescence which physically alters the space men occupy) although female orgasm produces a similar euphoric result.[28] The differences in empirical physical changes between men and women has been the subject of detailed research since the Masters and Johnson research effort in the1950s. It is not my intention to revisit that detailed and important field of research in detail. However, the rise of Internet pornography has promoted a sub-industry of scientific research about female orgasm that continues the earlier work on human sexuality. It has taken some time, say from 1970 and Germaine Greer's *Female Eunuch*, until the mid-2000s for research on women's response to visual stimuli and orgasm to emerge and celebrate as it were, a public presence connected to the liberation of the female body and from the constraints of public discussion about the subject. This development begs the question: is this an attempt to document and reproduce for women the intensity of sex that men encounter through tumes-

26.Stam, Robert (1989) Subversive Pleasure: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press :159.

27.Mulvey, Laura (1975) Screen, Vol. 16, No. 3: 6-18.

28.The Columbia Encyclopedia, on line, 2001-05

cence? As women engage with private images and sensations through Internet oriented consumption aimed at private arousal, are they gaining physical self-realization? Are women generating a sexual theory of emancipation, or reproducing an orientation to sex and the body that constructs pleasure in ways that has already been defined by men? These questions are informed by an understanding of screen-based stimuli, where research is aimed at "illuminating the realm of women's desire."[29]

The physical response women have to visual stimulation is being scientifically measured through the observation of sexual activity. This is a public matter, as suggested by a *New York Times* magazine story in January 2009, "What do Women Want?" There has been a rise in the amount of academic work about female sexuality and pornography in recent years, especially the work of English academic Feona Atwood.[30] Certainly the discussion of female sexuality in *The New York Times* identified how the subject has become part of a public discourse about pleasure for women – at least in a limited upper middle class US forum such a *The New York Times*.

Questions about female sexual behavior or what the researchers referred to as desire, or "lust" suggests another feminist moment.[31] This research refines our understanding of transgressive knowledge because it undermines "patriarchal culture" and its "symbolic order" as Mulvey argued, while reconstructing "woman" not as the "bearer of meaning," but the "maker of meaning."[32] In a specific rejection of the phallocentric imagination, researcher Marta Meana said her research shows that "women's desire is not relational, it's narcissistic" - it is dominated by the yearnings of "self-love," by the wish to be the object of erotic admiration and sexual need.[33] In its privatized moments of consumption, Internet pornography offers desire and narcissism within a new performativity. This performance of femaleness, with its aloneness at the monitor emerges from new meanings of control of the female body and mind.

For both men and women, questions about narcissism and pornography loom as a major component of Internet pornography. What can better describe the narcissist than the aloneness of sexual consumption at the video monitor to achieve gratification? Furthermore, the opportunity to perform is centrally articulated to a sense of individual empowerment at the monitor. Nowhere is this more obvious then with the emergence of Viagra at around the time Internet pornography became common. What is the rela-

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29. Bergner, D. (2009) "What do Women Want?" New York Times, Accessed URL at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25desire-t.html?emc=eta1

30. Atwood, Feona (2009) Porn.com: Making sense of online pornography. New York: Peter Lang.

31. Bergner, D. (2009) "What do Women Want?" New York Times, Accessed URL at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/magazine/25desire-t.html?emc=eta1

32. Mulvey, Laura (2001) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In (Eds) Durham and Kellner Cultural Studies Reader, Malden: Blackwell Publishing: 343.

33. Bergner, D (2009) As above

tionship between Viagra, a male sexual performance enhancing drug and Internet pornography? An answer to this question historicizes Internet pornography, generating as it must, the ubiquitous interest in sexuality amongst the Internet population of aging citizens. Stephen Maddison has offered a narrative of the introduction of Viagra that informs the changed context in which Viagra was introduced.[34] In Las Vegas, arguably the epitome of American consumerist irrationality ("What happens in Vegas stay in Vegas:" a kind of morality free zone) Viagra was introduced at a medical conference as a drug that would bring pleasure back to the bedrooms of America's (and the world's) men. Anxiety about sexual performance due to erectile dysfunction drove the introduction of the drug.[35] The success of the drug - sales of about 1 billion UK pounds per year (which was originally developed by Pfizer for angina or heart pain) - was so profound that discussions about it shifted from private conversations with one's physician to advertisements on US prime time television where details of the ailment are described. Maddison argues that the introduction of the drug, the advertising campaign and associated popularity of Viagra combine anxieties associated with "detumescence" with advertising's pressure to sexualize the body in such a way as to embody sexual performance within a mythology of neo-liberalism's promise of freedom. In this way, new sexual subjects are constructed. To take Maddison's suggestion further, new sexual subjects exist within the new framework of the Internet's "demand management," where a system of performance anxiety is induced by the intensified utilization of Internet pornography.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, on 18 June 2010 a review panel at the United States Food and Drug Administration rejected an application by the German pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim to license flibanserin or women's Viagra.[36] Much more remains to be written about this subject, following detailed research and the necessary theory building. Suffice to say, de-tumescence is not the issue for women, while "female sexual dysfunction" is the catchcry of the manufacturer which prompted intense debate.[37] Rather, performance anxiety layered onto the intensified sexualization of everyday life through the ready availability of Internet pornography – sexual stimulation – raises more questions about pornography and

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34. Maddison, Stephen (2008) "'Now that's Solid Evidence.' Hardcore Porn and the Biopolitical Penis." Accessed December 15, 2008), URL available at http://www.scribd.com/doc/6463180/Now-thats-solid-evidence-HardCore-Porn-and-the-Biopolitical-Penis#document_metadata

35. See for example "The Viagra Story." Accessed 12 February 2009, available at URL http://resources.schoolscience.co.uk/pfizer/viagra/index.html

36. Associated Press (2010) "Panel rejects pill to boost female libido." The Boston Globe, June 19: 2.

37. Wilson, Duff (2010) "Push to Market Pill Stirs Debate on Sexual Desire." June 16, at The New York Times.com, Accessed 17 June 2010 at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/business/17sexpill.html.

its impact on the psychological and physical sensibilities of women. Questions must also be asked about expectations of sexual activity in the era when the Internet provides high volumes of explicit sexual material. The debate about flibanserin is the marker of a transition in which women can become self-actualizing sexual agents, doubly activating their own engagement with pleasure (through the visual sensation of the Internet and with a specially designed pharmaceutical product). This combination of forces could be viewed as emancipatory because it allows women to actively control sexual desire, even while becoming subjects of a drug determined by the pharmaceutical industry's push for profit.

The point is that a new psychopathology can be traced to Internet pornography, based on knowledge of the physical reaction to individual visual stimuli. Indeed, the privatism of the individualistic context of Internet pornography is an "identity project."[38] Transgressive knowledge takes this reading much further. It offers more than another identity to perform. It suggests that sexual sensations that have previously been constrained have become part of the circulation of new possibilities of meaning. This aspect of proletarianization happens as the circulation of visual stimulation that was previously unknown is revealed and mobilized in a terrain of new sensations, further enabled by the Viagra's of the world. (If a user cannot achieve sexual sensations from visual stimulation alone, an additional technology is added to that of the Internet, namely a pharmaceutical solution helps generate the pleasure.)

Rethinking a Prostitution Model of Development

Not everyone who examines Internet pornography offers an optimistic interpretation of the way it exposes proletarianization. Pornography's most outspoken recent critic was the late Andrea Dworkin who maintained that the fundamentals of pornography combined misogyny and male self love within a continuation of the patriarchal exploitation of women. Following in her footsteps Catherine MacKinnon has adopted a critical legal framework for analyzing Internet pornography. It has been detailed in *Sex Equality* as a "sex equality theory of pornography."[39] In contrast with most academic writers in Porn Studies, MacKinnon's theory operates on the basis of a feminist materialist paradigm where women function within an exchange value system as prostitutes in "a white male world".[40] There is nothing new about criticizing the dominance of the male world view ("male gaze") as we saw above and were reminded by Laura Mulvey, but there is something new

38. De Voss, D. (undated) "Women's Porn Sites: Spaces of Fissues and Eruption – 'I'm a little bit of everything'." Accessed 4 February 2008,URL at http://web.mit.edu/21w.784/www/BD%20Supplementals/Materials/Unit%20Two/Rape%20and%20-Porn/identity%20on%20porn%20site.pdf

39. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press:1512

40. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press:1507

in the move MacKinnon makes in seeing Internet pornography as an extension of prostitution. She argues that almost without fail women are drawn into Internet pornography in a way that mirrors prostitution –that is, selling intimate images of their bodies as "chattels," or for African American women "slaves," through their subservience to a fetishlike male determination to "dehumanize" women.[41]

Within this critique – which is a continuation of Dworkin's perspective – MacKinnon argues that pornography "is a practice of sex discrimination and a violation of women's human rights."[42] MacKinnon's feminism does not tolerate liberal consumerism's license to indulge in market-based approaches to meeting human needs. In other words, prostitution itself must be resisted and *ipso facto* so should pornography due to its articulation with discrimination against women and as an abuse of women's human rights. According to MacKinnon, Internet pornography reinforces the male fetish of woman as the source of erotic stimulation, and the structural characteristics of digital media logically reinforce the relationship.

> The Internet thus blurs the already indistinct line between prostitution and pornography while facilitating pornography's social penetration and global dissemination.[43]

In making the case this way, MacKinnon places women in opposition to the male system of meaning where sexuality is the means of maintaining the servility of women in relation to men as "animalistic rapists."[44]

MacKinnon has little regard for claims for speech rights on the Internet. She argues that pornographic "speech" falls outside the legal system because women have no human rights within the US legal system.[45] The dominant male system of law make women's rights "extra judicial questions" because no law exists that explicitly concern women's speech.[46] Contemporary definitions of speech in the US "accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labeled 'speech' whenever the person engaging in the conduct intends thereby to express an idea."[47] MacKinnon believes it is impossible to sustain this limitless approach to speech rights. In fact, by conflating Internet pornography with speech, more questions are raised than resolved in the US because so much sensational material is available on the Internet that the value of speech as it was originally intended has been devalued. Trying to distinguish "freedom" of speech from codes of decency

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41. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1507-1508

42. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1510

43. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1507

44. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1507.

45. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press.

46. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1510.

47. MacKinnon, Catharine (2001) Sex Equality. New York: Foundation Press: 1529.

and obscenity expose the US legal system to questions about how rational it is, when so much of the Internet appears to be irrational, operating, as I mentioned earlier, at a pathological level of sensation. In other words, Internet pornography is not speech, nor should it be considered as such according to MacKinnon, and because women do not have equality, all their speech is devalued.

There is shock value in reading MacKinnon's philosophy of justice. She offers no space for negotiation within a liberal legal framework: all men are incorporated into the system of inequality. This would be an acceptable perspective if the Internet had not amplified one key attribute of liberalism, namely multiple levels of interpretive complexity, and the polyvalent readings that emerge within that complexity. The meanings of sex itself are now richer and full of potential. Such complexity means that while MacKinnon sees prostitution suborning equality within the imperatives of patriarchal market relations, in her model sex equality is essentialized in such a way that it cannot comprehend transgressive knowledge and its liberatory potential. To counter her essentialist sex equality theory of pornography is to liberate women from the single dimension of a top down reading of exchange value where women are chattels. The Bakhtin critic sees the opportunity in refusing MacKinnon's essentialist approach, all-the-while acknowledging her quest for equality.

To put it another way within the carnivalesque perspective, Internet pornography is a diffusionist cultural force that incorporates and normalizes prostitution while at the same time creating alternative possibilities for sexual and social behavior. Within Internet pornography the Bakhtin critic sees potential. The grotesque body is transformed through the "fanciful anatomy" of the body in carnival, destroying the suppressed claims to equality.[48] Powerless women overcome the suppression within the carnival of Internet pornography.

By introducing the dialectical nature of Internet pornography as a counterpoint to MacKinnon's argument, it should be reiterated that there is little or nothing to be gained by jettisoning her normative framework of sex equality. Claims to equality should not give way before the force of contemporary capitalism which in its most powerful manifestation is a type of prostitution writ large: can the laborer ever receive justice? Indeed, Internet pornography helps reveal this fundamental aspect of proletarianization. After all, "Equality marks the boundary between unacceptable conditions and an ideal vision, and therefore it is equality which provides the correct criteria for making the right choices."[49]

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48. Bhaktin, M. (1968) Rabelais and His World. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press: 346.

49. Sevenhuijsen, Selma (1998) Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist considerations of justice, morality and politics. London: Routledge: 42.

When read against the prostitution thesis of MacKinnon, Internet pornography offers another way of deconstructing equality. The decision to choose equality is not made within a status quo framework of the inequality of women or the institutionalization and normalization of prostitution. Rather, it is made within a framework of the emancipation of women from controlling interests, where women's actions are self managed in the pursuit of justice equality on their own terms. Ideally, this should not include the sale and utilization of their bodies within the market which is established around inferior conditions (despite what an entire generation of neo-classically trained economists and their acolytes proclaim about free markets). The ideal of equality offers the potential for women (and also includes most non-white minorities, the poor and those masses who have been and remain colonized) the chance to find a location where they can exist. Aspects of this argument have been proposed by Catherine Lumby in a shift towards a new mediated ideal for feminism.[50] Furthermore, it is no longer sufficient in a debate about equality to celebrate the "exploration of diverse sexual cultures at a particular point in time," because there is little to gain in reproducing a system committed to genre differentiations within the patriarchy.[51]

Despite these reservations, proletarianization is a reminder that the equality ideal is already in play. Internet pornography offers the means for women to remake their location within the dominant male system of meaning through their own experiences, and then break out of that system. Consequently, transgressive knowledge reproduces itself in Internet pornography, drawing up from the abject the potential to live in an unregulated way, with all the risks that entails. In a Bakhtin sense, Internet pornography expresses "organicism" which works "against the mechanical , against the dogmatic, against rules and those dedicated to rules and regulation... for matter, for fertility, for life-that-grows, for energy that unleashes."[52] Perhaps Internet pornography is the new annunciation – except that this messianic event is marked by the arrival of the end of the model of prostitution and the beginning of organicism in the carnival of the Internet. Is it possible to conceive of richer possibilities for human achievement that Internet pornography may yet reveal and mobilize?

Additional layers of meaning to proletarianization emerge by reiterating the potentiality within sexuality and thus human behavior. One of the most generous renditions of this perspective came in Theodore Zeldin's book

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50. Lumby, Catharine. (1997). Bad Girls: The media, sex and feminism in the 90s. St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

51. Attwood., Fiona (2005) Pornography and the Internet. In (Eds) K. Sarikakis and D. Thussu, Ideologies of the Internet. Cresskill, N.J.: IAMCR and Hampton Press: 179-193: 184.

52. Kinser, S. (1990) Rabeials's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext. Berkeley: University of California Press: 249.

An Intimate History of Humanity, where sexuality's multivariate role in society is consistently invoked to illustrate how values towards the body, gender, romance, pleasure and desire have changed over the centuries.

> Desire is no more explicable than taste. Over the centuries, it has been extraordinarily flexible and versatile, serving opposing causes, playing many different roles in history, like an actor, both comic and tragic, sometimes simple roles, reproducing hackneyed stereotypes, and sometimes experimental, complex ones, deliberately mysterious. This suggests that other alliances, other excitement, are also possible. [53]

The excitement about desire and pornography that the Internet has generated is, as Bakhtin suggested, an experiment that can be viewed in this historical moment as proletarianization.

Conclusion: Remaking the Bakhtin Critic

This chapter explored how transgressive knowledge operates through Internet pornography to reveal proletarianization as more than "the frenzy of the visible." This point was made by Bakhtin in writing about Rabelais: "Beyond the images that may appear fantastic we find real events, living persons, and the author's own rich experience and sharp observation."[54] Within this perspective the Bakhtin critic offers remade potential for equality in the new media era. Internet pornography reconstitutes social meaning within those hundreds of thousands of "real events, living persons" engaged in the "rich" performances of their sexuality and their "sharp observations" of personhood in all its inequality, producing then reproducing injustice then redefining equality and emancipation within the sensations of the carnival, where the abject offers unregulated insights into what it means to be human. As a new type of permanent experiment of the body, all its failures and its celebratory manifestations are filled with the potential of new knowledge. The question is, can the order of the material world be remade as we come to know the empire of sensations that is Internet pornography?[55] The answer is that transgressive knowledge reveals proletarianization in the politics of pleasure. What we do with this knowledge is the more pressing question.

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53. Zeldin. Theodore. (1994) An Intimate History of Humanity. New York: Harper Perrenial: 128.

54. Bakhtin, M, (1968) Rabelais and His World. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press: 438.

55. Dyer-Witherford, N. (1999) Cyber-Marx. Quoted in Hardt and Negri (2004) Multitude, New York: Penguin Press: 82.

Chapter 9

Terror, Jihad, the Internet and "ideological grooming" [1]

The temptation in writing about jihad is to do one of two things: take a massive brush to paint a picture of jihadism as a movement so deformed and mischaracterized that all of Islam is presented as a barbaric monotheistic force, or alternatively engage in a minute analysis of the Moslem faith so finely granulated that the kernels of truth about its terrorist actions are given meaning that belie the present complexity. Both accounts would be misleading. As well as being inaccurate once they were further refracted through their articulation with the Internet, the detailed characteristics of the claims made within some Islamic communities for holy war would be misconstrued. The "truth games" that Michel Foucault suggested human beings use to understand themselves within culture would be impossible to pursue.[2] Furthermore, neither of these approaches would be successful because proletarianization is not only about the application of already existing interpretative frameworks of Enlightenment analysis. It is also about

1. King, Oliver (2006) "Web of Extremism," The Guardian, 11 May. Accessed May 8, 2006 URL http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/blog/2006/may/11/olliegoesonj

2. Foucault, Michel (1994) Technologies of the Self," in Michel Foucault: Ethics, (Ed) Paul Rabinow, New York: The Free Press: 223- 251 (224).

establishing an analytical framework for comprehending the meaning of "Boko Haram," a Nigerian Islamic group whose name in English means "Western education is sacrilege."[3] Indeed, the unsettling logic of proletarianization is to be found in the way it refuses to settle around established modes of thought or action. It emerges out of a moral economy that is characterized by the continuation of the excesses of western-style capitalism where the historical conditions are different, despite claims that globalization reduces all contexts to one massified whole. However, despite these reservations, when combined with the Internet as a global network, proletarianization incorporates an exposure of the long history of otherness, of difference, class and identity that is not mediated by past renderings of civility. That is why proletarianization cannot settle in its economistic Marxist meanings because such meanings are limited to capital and western notions of civil society. Proletarianization as seen and experienced in the Internet era of jihad is about the constant circulation of alternative ideologies that are increasingly evident as privatization and deregulation combine to offer the worst of all possible worlds: invigorated fundamentalism. It is invigorated because we have seen and experienced it through the Internet as a holy war, a jihad, a curse on what has been assumed to be the continuation of Enlightenment values in reproducing civil society. The abject beg to differ.

As a mode of activity - a world view and a form of praxis - jihad engages the state in ways that differ from everything else in circulation, while it stretches the imagination of everyone outside its inner circle in the way it deconstructs rationality. For this reason it is a challenge to comprehend. It is mobilized through digital empowerment yet for civil society it produces its opposite; the demobilization of digital empowerment. It creates a new way of claiming power in a move that is entirely antithetical to what has previously been understood or acceptable. I am reminded of my Boston barber, a refugee from Iraq, who suggested to me – just before he picked up his razor to shave my neck – that the jihad were incomprehensible because even they did not know why they were doing what they were doing. It is into this knowledge vacuum, this irrationality, that the analysis of the Internet must move, into a space where uncertainty and risk are the key constituents.

In the previous chapter about pornography I claimed that the circulation of a variety of sexual practices offer a liberatory way of thinking about proletarianization as a new form of imagining human behavior, experience and organization. The implication is that proletarianization became evident through the unregulated flow of everything. In a reversal of established Enlightenment management control, bourgeois law encouraged the Internet to maximize all digital stuff. Transdisciplinary readings of this shift away

3. Associated Press, "800 escape during prison attack in Nigeria," The Boston Globe. September 9, 2010: A3.

from management through regulation recognize how the door of western Enlightenment was opened to transgressive content, where content is dedicated to terror, destruction and the denial of claims to cultural and social life.

When English researcher Sue Sudbury noted in June, 2009 at the *Porn Cultures: Regulation, political economy, technology* conference in Leeds that "The only time when authorities took notice of porn sites and prostitution was when it was related to terrorism," she identified the unique challenge the Internet incorporates.[4] State regulators overlook the singular individuality of pornography, while they focus on threats to the state and its citizens, because the Internet "sidesteps the State's authorial positions and produces mutable, transmittable and transferable products."[5] The distinction between the privatism of pornography and the publicness of jihadism complicates the discussion of the monitor space, because both occur in the same place / space. On the one hand, monitor space is a vehicle for bodily self-realization and a distraction from political action, while on the other hand the very same monitor space becomes a means and a medium for danger, propaganda and liberation because it mobilizes human action. In this ambiguously shady context, jihadism confronts the individual and the idea of civility within the intensified communicative field of the Internet.

Is it even possible to discuss the potentially liberated territory within which pornography circulates and to also discuss jihadist terror? As I noted earlier, when I first raised this question in a conference presentation at The University of California at Berkeley, my comments prompted an angry outburst from an English conference delegate who insisted that the two categories of cultural practice - pornography and jihad - should not be considered in the same context. My argument is that this discussion is not about the correctness or otherwise of academic conflations, as much as the redundancy of Enlightenment concepts of emancipation within liberalism. The unifying pipeline of the Internet determines that both pornography and jihadism share the same delivery mechanism. The unregulated characteristics of the Internet welcomes all content, transferring "a kind of market fatalism," that has been promulgated as the dominant global moral economy, "making Americans think that the unequal market results are somehow natural and spontaneous not man-made and policy dependent".[6] Within the moral economy of merged networks, the "total freedom" of the Internet becomes the myth of the liberal American market that is used by jihadists seeking "unfreedom." And while such contrapuntal readings may

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4.Sudbury, Susan (2009) Comments made at the Porn Cultures: Regulation, Political Economy, Technology Conference, June 15 and 16, University of Leeds, UK.

5.Shah, Nishant (2007) "Subject to technology: internet pornography, cyber-terrorism and the Indian state." Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3: 349-366 (358).

6.Dugger, William (2007) Book Review, "The Moral Economy of Class: Class and Attitudes in Comparative Perspective, by Stefan Svallfors." Journal of Economic issues, Vol. 41, no. 1: 308-309.

border on the asinine, they are frequently overlooked in the analysis of highly differentiated Internet material: looking at Internet pornography for example cannot, in my view, be effectively truthful if it fails to take into consideration privatism as an extension of the unfolding history of the constellation of technology.

In this chapter I want to take these complicated interactions and recognize the constellation of articulations between them and the Internet. In taking this approach directly from cultural studies, I will consider the way ideological grooming operates to produce actions that challenge existing notions of civil society. Here ideological grooming operates as a way of provoking a singular sensibility – a fundamentalist mindset of suicidal determination, which has been variously commented on and which I will discuss in the next section. I position ideological grooming at the extreme of David Nye's typology, where, after "satiric narratives" - the unexpected outcomes of technologies - emerge the "apocalyptic narratives" – "agents of doom."[7] Ideological grooming in its articulation with the Internet incorporates both of these characteristics. The subtitle of this book is clear enough with "unintended consequences," suggesting that terror was never, as I noted in the chapter on public policy, an intended outcome of the policies that brought about the Internet. However, a dismal reading of apocalyptic agency is unfortunately clearer than ever after the events of September 11, 2001 in the US, the Bali bombings in October 2002 and again in 2005 and the July 7, 2005 London terror / suicide explosions and the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, it is not a one way street of doom: everyone suffers. And while I am not a doomsdayist, or an advocate of apocalyptic thinking, I am not in this particular moment an optimist. The evidence suggests that society is on the negative side of its own historical equation. Surely this is clear in the way the Internet makes ideological grooming possible and thereby draws everyone into the culture of apocalyptic doom.

From Cultivation to Ideological Grooming – invigorated fundamentalism

Scotland Yard used "ideological grooming" in its attempt to describe why young Muslim men in England would blow themselves to smithereens with as many infidels as possible.[8] The phrase is derived from any terror act by groups in multifarious locations – the Irish Republican Army, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, London – where media converge around "the glorification of terrorism or an incitement to riot."[9] Internet streaming through

7.Nye, David E. (1998) Narratives and Spaces. New York: Columbia University Press: 179.

8.King, Oliver (2006) "Web of Extremism," The Guardian, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/blog/2006/may/11/olliegoessonj

9.King, Oliver (2006) "Web of Extremism," The Guardian.

YouTube and similar sources makes video available in such a way that ideological grooming becomes the means of encouraging "younger converts" to Islam (in the UK at least) "of the need to murder innocent civilians in the name of defending their religion."[10] The focus of the Internet to invoke irrational claims through appeals to emotion are inscribed in words like "glorification" and "defending." The point is that ideological grooming takes the immediacy of the experience of Islamic faith as it is generated through the Internet to invert it into a particular affect which can be best characterized as fundamentalism. In this world view, the apocalyptic replaces the liberal, the tolerant and the discursive. Antonio Roversi defined it within the bounds of Enlightenment standards of civility: "this discharge of obscenity, cruelty, hate and total lack of respect for human dignity, this appetite for violence and this contempt for life and opinions of others."[11] This perspective appeals to affect in the way it establishes the emotional boundaries that define Enlightenment values. In fact, assessing who is speaking about ideological grooming is an important consideration. A truthful understanding of who is speaking and why opens up the constellation of interests at work and shows specific values can be differentiated and recognized by their articulations within the constellation. For example, Roversi is writing as an educated university professional – a criminology academic - his commitment to Enlightenment values finds connotations in words like hate, violence and contempt when set against dignity and respect. To problematize this set of values is to engage in self-criticism, and to approach a clearer understanding of why jihadists utilize the Internet for terror.

The idea driving ideological grooming requires considerably more energy than it has received, as much because it raises questions about the unsettling fact of terrorism and because it conceives of jihadism in a way that collides with the liberatory aspirations of the Internet. That is, while the Internet projected the liberal ideal of the unimpeded global flow of information, the unanticipated outcome was that it introduced key questions about liberalism. The very positive thing it was encouraging became its opposite, the most negative, confirming what Horkheimer and Adorno suggested in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression."[12] In so doing, the Internet is unmaking the open tolerance of traditional liberalism by generating specific, otherwise limited, deeply constrained perspectives on social life by embodying jihadist values within the performance of faith extremes.[13] Inherent within itself its antimony opens up the flow of digital stuff in unregulated spaces and places. According to almost any definition, this is how fundamentalism is constructed – by the

10. King, Oliver, (2006) "Web of Extremism," The Guardian.

11. Roversi, Antonio (2008) Hate on the Net. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing: 3.

12. Adorno, Theodore and Horkheimer, Max (1977/1947) Dialectic of Enlightenment. London: Verso Classics: 36.

13. Williams, Raymond (1977) "The Sociology of Culture," in Marxism and Literature, 136-144.

willing and unwilling exclusion of counter arguments. It is also a characteristic of propaganda. It is how unbounded irrationality emerges in its linkages with the abject and identity politics.

Construction of ideological grooming can be grounded in two moments of US communication research. One analytical framework predates the Internet while the other has been proposed in response to the Internet. The first framework incorporates what amounts to an anxious critique of popular media especially television, originally presented by George Gerbner and Larry Gross in 1976.[14] Known as cultivation theory, it proposed and continues to be refined around the notion that media, television in particular, reinforces ideological renderings within society. Its lengthy history continues within the media effects tradition.[15] Gerbner and Gross considered the "pervasive influence" and "steady contribution" of television as a way of understanding the structure of meanings which they later categorized as "Cultural Indicators."[16] From an interdisciplinary perspective, cultivation theory brought together the possibilities of understanding the social world through the analysis of mediated behavior, marrying this orientation with psychology. They theorized the social and political influence of television, which gained extraordinary dominance in the US within the domestic space. Despite claims to the contrary by Gerbner, cultivation theory utilized social scientific measurement of behavior based on television viewing and thereby had to address criticisms that it claimed empirical predictability. This accusation prompted ongoing discussions and disagreements among US communication scholars.[17] For my purposes, cultivation theory and one of its direct offshoot, "the mean world index" suggests that the trajectory of the original research conclusions that Gerbner and his colleagues suggested is apposite: heavy utilization of media about "meanness" by users in specific "mean" contexts cultivates a mean world view. Put at an almost banal level, living mean, watching and hearing mean media produces meanness. In this sense, mean values already exist in a context and are reinforced by media that reproduce the same or similar values. This sequence of cause and effect is best represented by the word cultivation and owes something to cultural studies with its focus on context to provide sense making structures within a world view. This idea challenges liberal readings of diversity in media, replacing it with the repetitious expropriation of a limited and lim-

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14. Gerbner, George and Gross, Larry, (1976) "Living with Television: The Violence Profile." Journal of Communication 26: 173-199.

15. Signorielli, Nancy and Morgan, Michelle (1990) Cultivation Analysis: New Directions in Media Effects Research. Newbury Park: Sage.

16. Gerbner George, Gross, Larry, Morgan Michael and Signorielli Nancy (1980) "The Mainstreaming of America: Violence Profile No.11." Journal of Communication 30: 10-29 :14.

17. Newcomb, Horace (1978) "Assessing the Violence Profile Studies of Gerbner and Gross: A Humanistic Critique and Suggestion." Communication Research 5: 264-283.

iting ideology. Furthermore, it does not allow for Stuart Hall's negotiated reading within a liberal system because there is little-to-nothing to negotiate in either the media or the context: at the risk of being trite, when it is all mean all the time, there is not much sense in pretending that somehow kindness, love and open tolerance will emerge. In this way, the homology of ideological grooming with fundamentalism comes into operation through the theoretical structure of cultivation.

Cultivation theory's meanness index is pertinent to jihadism and the Internet because it allows an image to build of the generative and reactive behavior that is produced among people who consistently utilize news media with mean spirited, dismal messages. It can also be appreciated as part of what Larry Grossberg theorized as "affective alliances," a condition in which rock music audiences united around the ideology of youth, music, sex, drugs, rock and roll and recordings to generate an ideology of their own in a resistive moment that was realized in the liberalization of everyday American life in the late 1960s: it connected the body of young people (individually and collectively) with the possibilities of enacting material change.[18] In a counter reading of the collective nature of affective alliances, the mean world can be reconstructed within the singularity of the Internet's monitor space. In this privatized environment, all distractions, counter ideologies, "noise" that might act as a distraction within the notion of liberalism's cosmopolitanism is removed. The ideology of meanness speaks directly to and for the individual user. Could anything be further removed from the massive collective affect of a rock concert event? The image of the aloneness of the Internet user conveys the affect, and is known to all users as a new and isolating experience. In the context of a heavily managed environment such as a study, a classroom, a madrasa in a mosque or church, where theology is studied and the internalization of faith is the goal, the singularity of meanness can be fully realized in the Internet. This happens within most faiths as the point of singular self-reflection and humility before a greater deity. Full self-realization occurs with the awakening of truth for the individual in the community of believers. In this context meanness can be constructed within a model of self-annihilation for the jihad, where spiritual value overwhelms every rational question. This is the force of fundamentalism which translates to profound claims of identity.

Fundamentalism is cultivated within an ideological framework. The rise in popularity of the Egyptian scholar and the founder of fundamentalist Islamic movements Sayyid Qutb (and his brother Mohammad Qutb, who educated Usama bin Laden) established much of the groundwork for the martyr's cause in his book *Milestones Along the Way*. In that book he suggested that "understanding that instruction is for action" is the key to fulfillment and knowledge, thereby constructing the core of fundamentalism –

18. Grossberg, Lawrence (1997) "Re-Placing the Popular" in Dancing in Spite of Myself: Essays on Popular Culture. Durham: Duke University Press: 1-26 (19, 13).

living without doubt in one's actions.[19] The Internet has gone further than any other technology to remove distractions from the core concerns of singularity of action and its embodied performance. It is a perfect tool for fundamentalism and why US communication scholarship offers additional assistance in understanding the relationship between jihad and the Internet.

This approach can be characterized as *the Internet as essentializing tool critique*. It differs from Gerbner and Gross's work on cultivation, yet it exists within that field, despite the fact the Gerbner's and Gross's work is not included in the analysis. This absence indicates that communication research and media theory is being generated by non-specialists. Legal scholar Cass Sunstein and computer scientist Jaron Lanier have both produced coherent Internet as essentializing tool critiques. Their social critiques reflect a general deepening anxiety among liberals about the rise of fundamentalism, where both writers view the Internet as a tool that is becoming its opposite: a mechanism for liberalism's antonym. Their work is informed by their academic traditions - the law and computer science - and can be considered indicators of concern in civil society by nonspecialists.

Sunstein's contribution is based on his work as a legal scholar who is informed by a keen eye for shifts in social liberalism and an engagement with forward progress in the American imagination. As a public intellectual, he is the equal of Lawrence Lessig. Sunstein's work includes a couple of publications that channel liberal anxiety about the Internet as an essentializing tool and serve as a bridge to understanding the way cultivation operates as the means for ideological grooming to generate fundamentalism. Sunstein's foray into this field came with an article in the *Boston Review*, which was reworked in his book *Republic.Com 2.0*.[20] The book was built around legal and Constitutional theories in which the "public forum doctrine" offered a citizen-centric case for how speech creates a social world which the government protects with laws rather than censorship. Sunstein argued that the public forum doctrine serves three important functions:

1. it ensures that speakers can have access to a wide array of people;
2. it allows speakers not only to have general access to heterogeneous people, but also to specific people and specific institutions with which they have a complaint;
3. it increases the likelihood that people generally will be exposed to a variety of people and views.[21]

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19. Qutb, Sayyib (undated) Milestones. URL available at http://majalla.org/books/2005/qutb/nilestone.pdf: 4

20. Sunstein, Cass (2007) Republic.Com 2.0. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

21. Sunstein, Cass (2001) "The Daily We: Is the Internet really a blessing for democracy?" Boston Review, Summer 2001, http://bostonreview.net/BR26.3/sunstein.php, accessed 15 October 2010.

The counter argument is that the Internet removes "unanticipated encounters" between citizens when it creates "filters" with which Internet users personalize their interactions to produce what Sunstein somewhat sarcastically refers to as an "apparently utopian picture."

In this world of leave-me-alone-to-be-free-to-pursue-whatever-I-want antisociality, Sunstein sees a rise in individuality through the selection of increased options (for information), customization (of information) and (information) choices because of the Internet. He also argues that group polarization emerges because of the isolation the Internet offers users, even while it operates in a heterogeneous society. It is a classic example of a contradiction, where the claim to freedom and democracy, creates the opportunity for less of both. The transition to privatism, as I argued earlier, is what concerns Sunstein, where the Internet actively constrains social interaction through the monitor space, even as it offers that same space in which to cultivate world views. But those world views are circumscribed by the limits of the information in circulation within that perspective and the abrogation of the commitment to Enlightenment knowledge. Indeed, privatism happens precisely in the making of the Internet as an open, unregulated forum that immediately closes down everything except the fundamentalist ideology that is constantly reproduced in an endless cycle of private affect. What results is an "apparently utopian picture," derived through the Internet and constituted by self sufficiency and autonomy for the individual. Potential, as conceived in the west as the full realization of the autonomous individual through scientific investigation and acquisition of knowledge about human nature is shut down through the mobilization of antithetical values and actions embedded in a limited set of information sources.[22] This double articulation - openness that produces closure - is a challenge within the history of technology, as David Nye and other technology writers have noted.[23] Nevertheless, Sunstein's "public forum doctrine" is helpfully evocative in explaining the way jihadists cultivate privatism through the Internet. Their religious faith is constructed in such a way that they can claim without fear of contradiction, that there is no public forum to challenge their claims - they are polarized by the decadent west and must respond with holy war. In this perspective, civil society is a fiction.

More recently Jaron Lanier has proposed a computer science analogy for cultivation theory in the digital space, which throws light on Sunstein's belief in the "public forum doctrine." It offers a way of imaging the unintended consequences of a technology which is limited by the internal logic of science and thus adds to *the Internet as essentializing tool critique*. Lanier's concept of "lock in," detailed in *You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto*, argues along lines

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22. Breen, Marcus (1997) "Information does not equal Knowledge, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, and Todorov, Tzvetan (2009) In Defence of The Enlightenment. London: Atlantic Books.

23. Ruth Schwartz Cowan (2010) "Looking Back in Order to Move Forward: John McDermott, "Technology: The Opiate of the Intellectuals." Technology and Culture, Vol. 51, No 1: 199-215.

which Lawrence Lessig rehearsed in *Code*, namely that computer software limits the free pursuit of knowledge and social relations.[24] Lanier argues that the "exceptionally rigid process" of lock-in occurs because "maturing computer programs can cause digital designs to get frozen into place... This happens when many software programs are designed to work with an existing one."[25] The "absolute tyranny" of lock-in, says Lanier, acts like the concept of reification to turn ideas into reality through a "limiting model" of determination.[26] As an analog for Sunstein's views, Lanier's concept of lock-in is terrifying because of the way it allows the model of cultivation to inform jihadism. The inevitable hardening against alternative possibilities for thought and behavior is built into the software that drives the Internet.

This tendency in computer science fits within Nye's apocalyptic perspective yet it is conceptually new in the way it explores the internal limitations of the Internet. Furthermore, Lanier's work can be added to the multidisciplinary approach deployed in this analysis because it mobilizes transgressive knowledge about computer software, ultimately noting that "people have often respected (digital) bits too much, resulting in a creeping degradation of their own qualities as human beings."[27] Set against the grain of technological optimism, this degradation perspective is unpalatable in its criticism of the Internet's embedded technological optimism and its touted utility that pours through media marketing campaigns on an hourly basis. It is apparent that jihadism incorporates the degradation of Enlightenment notions of individuality within the collective, replacing the social world of possibilities with a limited set of theocratic demands.

The entire spectrum of Internet communication can be understood as sets of discreet developments that offer emancipation just as much as it offers enclosure. And while the entire network is a series of interconnected technical systems, there is no reason to believe that the rise of jihadism is anything but the result of selective use of limited channels. Cultivation happens through the Internet to create an age of fundamentalism in which there are few check and balances. Fundamentalism becomes the narrative of the mean spirited, the dismal and the abject, where the conditions under which people live are shared in the connected world. They see an image of themselves, which the jihadist sees as both a cause and a celebration. In this aspect of proletarianization, unregulated behavior allows the circulation and promotion of barbarity that Enlightenment sensibilities sought to manage.

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24. Lanier, Jaron (2010) You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 7.

25. Lanier, Jaron (2010) You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 7.

26. Lanier, Jaron (2010) You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 8, 11.

27. Lanier, Jaron (2010) You are not a Gadget: A Manifesto. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 119.

In this way the Internet facilitates "selective essentialism."[28] When Iraqi jihadists filmed then streamed on the Internet the beheading of Nick Berg in 2004, that act combined the incentive to punish a western non-believer as well as the utility of the Internet to propagate the act as a form of visual and cultural terror. It was the shocking visualization of this act of murder on my monitor that informed my renewed concept of proletarianization. To suggest that the "event" was not appropriate for the monitor space is banal in the extreme. Its appearance on the Internet was intended to offend every sensibility of liberal and western standards of human life. And yet the apocalyptic force that is built into the technology of the Internet through that act becomes an extension of Kantian immaturity, then moves beyond it boundaries. In fact, jihadist apocalypticism realizes "radical evil" "because in the face of reason for acting that is the moral law, it sets itself up, antagonistically, as a rival reason."[29] The connection with the abject consolidates our understanding of this aspect of jihadism, as the abject itself has nothing to loose (it has nothing anyway) and is no longer restricted by the rules of engagement as defined by the Enlightenment. Jihadists use their knowledge of the world to reject every previously existing standard which can be presented as imposed universals with no roots in the local culture. The shift to selective essentialism is made within a rejectionist framework. Radical evil is presented by the west as the worst of all rational worlds, while for the jihadists it marks the realization of the everyday knowledge of their lives.

Shifting identities

In the chapter about class and the Internet I pointed out the challenges involved in claiming class as either a concept or a category with which to analyze the way the Internet impacted social relations within proletarianization. While class continues to exist as an analytical category, the Internet's informationization incorporates the "indigenization" of highly differentiated sensations of identity to complicate the picture.[30] In other words, class and identity collapse into each other. Jihadists are an example of this complication. For example, how do the educated men who flew commercial aircraft into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon exhibit proletarianization? To reiterate, proletarianization is about the circulation on the Internet of the total body of knowledge about being abject. That this knowledge is valued when it is "practiced" is what makes fundamentalism a contradiction

28. Breen, Marcus (2011) "Identity and Gender." In (Eds) Phillip Kalantzis Cope and Karim Herab, Properties of Technology, Houndmills: Palgrave:

29. D'Allonnes, Myriam Revault (2004) French Women Philosophers: A Contemporary Reader. In (Ed) Christina Howells, London: Routledge: 386 – 404 (386).

30. Hartley, John (2005) "Introduction "Cultural Exceptionalism": Freedom, Imperialism, Power, America." In (Eds.) John Hartley and Roberta Pearson, American Cultural Studies: A Reader, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1-13 (9).

within liberalism. The Internet links knowledge with practice to allow for the realization of religious experience. Ideological grooming describes this praxis. Cultivation theory helps make it clear that the Internet positions the class orientation of abjection in combination with a reified and valorized sensation of otherness which is cut off from the Enlightenment's mode of self regulated behavior. Privatism within the Internet achieves alterity – a state of being other – as abject, often with a hopeless horizon of continuing immiseration.

In any context this is a powerful combination that achieves its apotheosis in "negative identity."[31] Franz Fanon argued that this negativity is a perspective that is formed as a result of antagonism to and therefore in relation to other forms of identity. Not the least of these negative identities are the structures of knowledge and experience that operate as extensions of colonial, imperial and empiric claims on the previously emancipated (before colonialism). In moving into a state of negative identity, the meaning of being abject is filled with potential.

Negative identity collapses into class uncertainties to stream proletarianization as a position of power for the abject in a revolutionary war of attrition.[32] Curiously, just as claims that the Internet offers "rhizomes or informal networks" to allow for the fluidities and mobilities of everyday life in a kind of celebration, this same vitality mobilizes jihadism and fundamentalism generally.[33] Even while a kind of technological triumphalism suggests that the processes of identity within the Internet offer a new "system of relations," Islamic identity and jihadism are a part of the multiple contingencies that are also in play.[34] It is, to recall Slack and Wise, "an unfortunate fact of our culture," that what the western perspective imagines as a universal celebration of technology as progress, is also a celebration of limits, or constraints, of hatred and contempt that are reinforced through manufactured information and knowledge limits, where the rhetoric of repetition reinforces Internet privatism and remakes it within the religious limits of jihad.[35] The otherness of alterity becomes abjectness, the knowledge of a negative identity that mobilizes action within Islam.

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31. During, Simon (2005) Cultural Studies: A critical introduction. New York: Routledge: 147.

32. Buruma, Ian (2009) "Living with Islam." The New York Review of Books, May 14: 11- 14.

33. Nakamura, Lisa (2002) Cvbertypes: Race, Ethnicity and Identity on the Internet. New York: Routledge: 128.

34. Rossiter, Ned (2006) Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers / Institute of Network Cultures: 167.

35. Slack, Jennifer. D., Wise, John.M., (2005). Culture and Technology: A Primer. New York: Peter Lang and Šisler, Vit (2009). "Palestine in Pixels: The Holy Land, Arab-Israeli Conflict and Reality Construction in Video Games." Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication, Vol. 2 (2): 275- 292.

This argument would be insufficient save for one other constituent of jihad that combines with Moslem belief to reinforce identity. That is the notion of "individual duty" within Islam. The individual is closely connected with the community, and it is the individual who must respond when the community is attacked, according to Mary Habek. This is clear when reading passages of the Qur'an, which I will not quote here. In Abrahamic religions in general there is a connection between individual subservience to a greater power and the commitment to the community (the church / mosque combined with the directions of older authorities). The total abnegation of the "self" to the community - which is God on earth - is the most powerful aspect of fundamentalism because it brings the psychological and sociological together in a single focus of self-realization. Within the traditions of some aspects of Islam, jihad has been linked to "individual duty" where identity is realized within warfare.

> The term "individual duty" is very powerful in Islam – it is applied to the basic duties of the religion which no one else can do for another. Thus, one cannot pray, fast or pay charity for any other person.[36]

The Internet's privatism connects directly with individual duty, cultivating the commitment to faith. In this context, negative identity that is constitutive of being abject becomes a badge of honor when set against the west and non-believers.

The Internet takes the already present theological and cultural attributes of Islam and magnifies them around claims that can be refined within a negative identity. For example, in a news story from the Maldives in 2010, a Swiss couple renewed their wedding vows spoken by a Dhivehi-language speaking resort employee. The vows were later translated into English, and illustrate the deep feelings towards non-Moslems that may be part of the culture. The celebrant is alleged to have said:

> You are swine. The children that you bear from this marriage will all be bastard swine. Your marriage is not a valid one. You are not the kind of people who can have a valid marriage. One of you is an infidel. The other, too, is an infidel and, we have reason to believe, an atheist, who does not even believe in an infidel religion.[37]

This kind of othering is typical of fundamentalism everywhere. When it becomes part of the structure of relations as it is re-invoked through the Internet's ideological grooming process, it mutates into an intensified identity politics, powerfully linked to notions of class and power. On the surface, the hyper-localizing religious claims made in the Maldives case against the tourists has nothing to do with the Internet, yet it serves as an example of the othering of the west within an Islamic mode of thought. As the Internet be-

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36. Habek, Mary (2009). Teaching the Long War and Jihadism. Foreign Policy Research Institute Footnotes, Philadelphia, Vol. 14, No. 25: 3.

37. Pidd, Helen (2010) "Maldives hotel apologizes over marriage blessing abuse." http//:www.guardian.co.uk/world2010/oct28maldives-apology-marriage-vow-couple, Accessed 28 October, 2010.

comes increasingly central to the conflicting foci of global and local (or the hyper-global and the hyper-local) the ideologies that inform jihadism also inform opinions elsewhere in the world. Fundamentalism is a response to a long history of othering.

From *Battle of Algiers* to Baghdad and back

It is worth remembering that the history of jihadism within the context of the Middle East is not only about religion. It is about nationhood, independence and sovereignty, which coexist through the Internet's global connections within continuing "anti-imperialist cultural resistance."[38] *Battle of Algiers* is a reminder of the history of the west's relationship with the Moslem world. This 1966 film is not just a convenient trope with which to discuss the Middle East and othering in the era before the Internet. In 2003, US media reported that Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, Department of Defence and Pentagon officials viewed the *Battle of Algiers* at the time the invasion of Iraq was starting. It suggested that while September 11, 2001 "changed everything," according to commentators, analysts, politicians and policy makers including Vice-President Dick Cheney speaking to Tim Russert in 2003 on *Meet The Press*, it was really the Internet that had changed everything.[39] US officials were slow to realize this change.

The suggestion has been made that the change to everything was in the way the US responded to attacks and the challenge to its empiric power and the way September 11, 2001 reinforced core American values of imperial righteous certainty.[40] However, the real change was the cultural shift that occurred when the unregulated Internet made it possible for what appeared to most people as irrational acts, to be perpetrated by jihadists. Sure, the hijacking of planes and acts of terror on American soil were possible without the Internet, as the grotesquely misguided Timothy McVie had proved with his bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1992. What was not similar to the past was the background of Internet empowerment. The Internet made it possible for jihadists to undertake acts of war and terror on foreign soil through the coordinated use of cell phones connected through the Internet. In this sense, *Battle of Algiers* was an anachronistic effort to claim knowledge based on views about foreigners of Arabic heritage.

The film was watched as the Iraq invasion began to look like a lengthy guerilla engagement against a local insurrection, then a conventional war, then a civil war, after being portrayed as a veritable cake walk by various new conservatives ("neo-cons" such as Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and Condoleezza Rice). *New York Times* reporter Michael Kauf-

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38. Said, Edward (1991) Raritan, Summer npn.

39. Cheney, Dick (2003), Meet the Press, http//:www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3080244/

40. Bacevitch, Andrew (2010) Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War. New York: Metropolitan Books.

man noted that there was collective interest by the Pentagon in the way insurgency was portrayed in the film.

> The Pentagon's showing drew a more professionally detached audience of about 40 officers and civilian experts who were urged to consider and discuss the implicit issues at the core of the film -- the problematic but alluring efficacy of brutal and repressive means in fighting clandestine terrorists in places like Algeria and Iraq. Or more specifically, the advantages and costs of resorting to torture and intimidation in seeking vital human intelligence about enemy plans.[41]

Kaufman noted that the flier inviting guests to the Pentagon screening declared, "How to win a battle against terrorism and lose the war of ideas. Children shoot soldiers at point-blank range. Women plant bombs in cafes. Soon the entire Arab population builds to a mad fervor. Sound familiar? The French have a plan. It succeeds tactically, but fails strategically. To understand why, come to a rare showing of this film."[42] If any "understanding" was generated it not clear in the years immediately following. The idea to watch the film came from the Directorate for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, while the Defense Department seemed blissfully unaware of how the Internet challenged this civilian-led group charged with "responsibility for thinking aggressively and creatively" on issues of guerrilla war.[43] For film critic A.O. Scott, *Battle of Algiers* may have been watched, "not presumably to instruct today's military planners and policy makers in the finer points of black-and-white cinematography or to delight them withEnnio Morricone's plangent, pulse-accelerating score, but rather so they might learn something from watching the earlier efforts of a Western power to deal with terrorism in an Arab capital."[44]

The fact remained that in the eyes of the US Defence establishment, the Arabic and Moslem world were viewed as a mob, like some othered non-American group seen rioting in the streets in the final celebratory scenes of *Battle of Algiers*. In a cinematic misreading in the Internet era, they were no longer "out there" in some kind of celluloid location. They and it, the global war, jihad, is here. For the US Department of Defence, which became the Department of Attack, learning that the Internet changed everything came

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41. Kaufman, Michael (2003) "The World: Film Studies; What Does the Pentagon See in 'Battle of Algiers'?" The New York Times, September 7. Accessed December 3,2007, URL http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B03E6DE1F38F934-A3575AC0A9659C8B63

42. Kaufman, (2003) "The World: Film Studies; What Does the Pentagon See in 'Battle of Algiers'?" The New York Times, September 7. Accessed December 3, 2007, URL http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B03E6DE1F38F934A3575AC0-A9659C8B63The New York Times,

43. Kaufman, (2003) As above.

44. Scott, A.O. (2004) "Searching for Modern Lessons in Films that Recall old Wars,"The New York Times, January 14. Accessed December 3,2007, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9800E3DA1430F931A25752C0A-9629C8B63d

later. In the meantime, the US defence establishment channeled ignorance about Islam that had been fed by Samuel Huntington's essay and book *The Clash of Civilizations,* which argued for an impossible connection between east and west. As Edward Said suggested in a review of Huntington's approach:

> How finally inadequate are the labels, generalizations and cultural assertions. At some level, for instance, primitive passions and sophisticated know-how converge in ways that give the lie to a fortified boundary not only between "West" and "Islam" but also between past and present, us and them, to say nothing of the very concepts of identity and nationality about which there is unending disagreement and debate.[45]

The Internet swept away this paradigm, even though it has strong vestiges in the present which continues as if the Internet has not connected the US and the West with the East and Moslem tradition.

As if that shift from non-western othering to globalized inclusion was not difficult enough, the continuation of the imperial project from the West, assumes that boundaries arbitrarily drawn on maps by the British and the French delineate nations like Iraq and Afghanistan with some kind of modernist coherence. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, all the attempts to write a meta-narrative of Islam must face the Internet's ability to cultivate localized acts of specific tribal and sectarian rejectionism of the West. Moreover, the rejectionism operates within the context of religious revolutionary fervor motivated "by personal and political rage" within negative identity – an identity that is realized in individual annihilation and martyrdom, in a proletarianization everyone with a monitor can share.[46] Into this powerful force field of the monitor space is the additionalcontextual energy of Islam that has produced "volcanoes of anger and revenge"[47] against the continuation of action by "Crusader governments,"[48] which unites jihad in "common hatred of foreigners."[49] The Internet has magnified the connectedness of the experience of the colonized east within the march of western politics, while simultaneously magnifying localized identity politics. All positions are in opposition when they meet in jihad.

The error that almost every analyst of jihad makes is, as Edward Said controversially suggested, the othering of Islam and non-western forms of knowledge, as seen from the position of liberalism within the Enlighten-

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45. Said, Edward (2001) "The Clash of Ignorance," The Nation, October 22. URL at http//www:thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance?page=0,1

46. Buruma, Ian, (2009) Living with Islam." The New York Review of Books, May 14: 11-13, 12.

47. The Guardian (2009) 9 July video.

48. BBC, "Statement claiming London attacks," Jihad Organization in Europe (2005) BBC News, Accessed 10 December 2008, http//: www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4660391.stm

49. Giustozzi, Antonio (2008) Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The neo-Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. New York: Columbia University Press: 85.

ment. To reproduce this kind of reading is to fail to recognize that the Internet remakes fundamentalism through a hardening of positions in both the east and the west. Proletarianization reproduces and feeds the urgency within limited readings of history – be it the east or in the west. Against what must be considered a global trend to fundamentalism and away from liberalism, Sunstein's "public forum doctrine" seems like little more than aspirational Enlightenment legalese.

Responses – Informational Fundamentalism?

To appreciate the challenges presented by jihad some observations about US Government responses indicate how the Internet still cannot be assumed to be part of the discussion. Two points of example will suffice: the testimony of Khalid Shiekh Muhammad released by the US military and some key US legislative and Supreme Court commentary.

Khalid Sheikh Muhammad was captured inside a Pakistan military compound in Rawlpindi in 2003.[50] He was held prisoner, interrogated by US captors (water boarded) and faced a military tribunal or Combatant Status Review at Guantanamo Bay Prison in Cuba on 10 March, 2007, to establish if he met US Government criteria as an "enemy combatant." Many commentaries have noted that Khalid Sheikh Muhammad claimed in this hearing to have beheaded the *Wall Street Journal* journalist Daniel Pearl, as if that is the only fact of consequence in the testimony. However, the text indicates the central function of laptop computers for Khalid Sheikh Muhammad. The record is unclear just how many computers had been found with hard drives containing relevant information with the detainee. The point is that its contents explained close involvement by Khalid Shiekh Mohammad in jihad, which he admitted in the tribunal.

> So when I said computer hard drive / hard disc, same thing. All these point only one witness he can say yes or not cause he is this computer is under his possession him computer. And also specifically if he said Muhammad Atta picture had been this hard drive. I don't think should be accepted. There are many 100 thousands Americans who have a lot of picture on their computer. You cannot say I find Muhammad Atta on your computer then use this fact against you. Or you find any files in your computer to be what about it's mine, it's not my computer.[51]

The Tribunal President was disinterested in the laptop and its hard drive, suggesting that while the accusations against Khalid Sheikh Mohammad were based on the information in the computer, they were of less relevance than his own admissions. The computer files showed that he was working

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50. CNN.Com (2007), "Khalid Sheik Muhammad: I beheaded American reporter." March 15, Accessed 28 October 2010, http//:www.cnn.com07/US/03/15/Guantanamo.mohammad/index.html

51. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad (2007) Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024 :12

for Al Quida, corresponding with Usama bin Laden and active in utilizing computers for information management and storage. The Tribunal President's view was that, "Whether the Detainee had actual title or ownership of the computer/hard drive or the house where the capture took place is irrelevant to the determination of the Detainees status as an enemy combatant."[52] The surprising aspect of this commentary is that while Khalid Sheikh Mohammad is concerned to explain who owned the computer and hard drives, as late as 2007, a US military tribunal hardly seemed to care, as it concentrated on the legal aspects of his combatant status. This kind of disciplinary myopia indicates that while the Internet is indeed global, the inability of highly trained western specialists to fully appreciate its incorporation into the jihad is a limitation in the fight against terror.

Furthermore, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's commentary about pictures on his laptop of Mohammad Atta, the alleged leader of the hijackers on September 11, 2001, hints at his understanding and awareness of the ubiquity of information and computer ownership. Somewhat curiously, the Tribunal President, a (redacted name) US Navy Captain, does not respond to the suggestion that millions of Americans probably have a picture of Mohammad Atta on their laptop hard drives as well. As Anotonio Gustozzi noted in his study of the neo-Taliban in Afghanistan, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop*, the Taliban and jihadists generally were adept at utilizing information sources, going as far as not using satellite phones after they realized they offered targets for signal tracking devices, including drones.[53] As jihad hardened into a supra-nationalist movement, the global information exchanges gained salience perhaps even centrality in the intertwined spaces of propaganda, jihad organizational communication around military actions and everyday use, education and local / global connectivity.

The dismissal of the computer files and communication concerns by the Tribunal suggests that the US was unaware of or disinterested in the power of the Internet for jihad. The Tribunal wanted to concentrate on establishing the real and material status of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad as an enemy combatant. Meanwhile, the "virtual" of the hard drive was the site where ideological grooming was embodied. That cultivation was realized in physical acts of terror. In a remarkable irony, the unregulated Internet, touted in the west as a tool for advancing the interests of citizens, allowed jihad to organize, coordinate and speak to Moslems and non-Moslems alike, for example, through Usama bin Laden's video, voice and website presence. Here then was proletarianization at another remove – the unfiltered exposure of a world view that confronted and challenged the existing and dominant western world order which persisted with a courtroom seeking to determine with pen and paper the status of the man standing in front of it.

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52. President - Redacted, US Navy Captain, (2007) Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024 :11.

53. Giustozzi, Antonio (2008) Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The neo-Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. New York: Columbia University Press: 152.

The pre-Internet approach of the US military judicial apparatus did not last much after 2007. Later that year US legislators started taking a keen interest in the Internet. Legislation introduced into the US Congress showed that networked terror organizations were being taken seriously. *H.R. 1955: Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007* was broad ranging in its vision, describing Internet-linked violent behavior as illegal. What is significant in contrast to Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's hearing was that this Act was premised on recognition of the Internet as facilitator of information *into* the US. Where before, terror, jihad and revolutionary Islam could be kept "over there" as it were, protecting citizens on US soil became closely connected with the Internet.

> The Internet has aided in facilitating violent radicalization, ideologically based violence, and the homegrown terrorism process in the United States by providing access to broad and constant streams of terrorist-related propaganda to United States citizens.[54]

On the surface this transition to a focus on national interests linked to Internet activity seems to have little to do with proletarianization. Surely the question is what did the US Government and legislators expect? The Internet was precisely the vehicle that made it possible for "constant streams" of unregulated human activity to be incorporated into the network with the intention of creating a new material reality. The September 11, 2001 events brought home specific forms of foreign hatred towards the US and the west, indeed to all infidels. The sensibility has become an everyday expression of hatred that moves beyond propaganda to be realized in terror acts that can be seen and experienced through the Internet. Imbricating everyday life within the culture of war, terror and horror is not what the Enlightenment hoped to achieve, yet it is where we are now positioned, as the Internet's resources are distributed and available as effectively amongst jihadists as among the liberal west.[55]

The incorporation of information through the Internet into jihad has provoked policies built around the emergence of a new discourse about cyber war and information warfare.[56] Much of the debate about this new warfare is premised on two beliefs: that the Internet can be fully monitored and that the enemy cannot be engaged in discussion. The first aspect of this dual shutdown of communication was laid out in The Patriot Act of 2001. Also know as The "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001", it provided a legal framework for the gradual rollout of total Internet surveillance. (Given its comprehensive claims to total sur-

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54. US Congress, (2007) H.R. 1955 Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act 2007: (3)

55. Lamloum, Olfa (2009) "Hezbollah's Media." Global Media and Communication, Vol. (3): 353-367.

56. See for example Institute for the Advanced Study of Information Warfare, URL http://www.psycom.net/war.1.html

veillance activity, it is even more curious why it was not mentioned in the Review of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad). As legislation it ran into significant opposition from free speech advocates, who struggled to convince the public that a legal regime of total surveillance shifted some of the principles of the First Amendment's defense of free speech to a lower priority.[57] Indeed, claims for the continuation of the Enlightenment notion of "speech" as an expression of the rights of the person were redefined by The Patriot Act. That redefinition continues and in doing so reinforces the salience and energy of proletarianization, where every speech act is observed, recorded and open to scrutiny by the state or its agencies. This focus on detailed recording and analysis of data within a US war and security framework that is imbued with patriotic fervor is so narrow that it suggests another iteration of fundamentalism, that is informational fundamentalism. This assertion begs the question: Is it too much to suggest that the creation of information warfare invokes a type of fundamentalism? Much more work needs to be undertaken to explore this and related questions.

An unexpected aspect of proletarianization as a mode of operation came through the second shutdown. In June 2010, the Supreme Court announced that after 12 years of litigation it was illegal for US individuals to "knowingly provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization:" a claim that had been made in the *Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996*.[58] In particular, those organizations deemed as terror organizations by the US State Department could not receive, "any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, *communications equipment*, *facilities*, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel or more individuals who may be or include oneself) and transportation, except medicine or religious materials."[59] The argument was around the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which fought for independent states, the PKK in southeastern Turkey and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. The Supreme Court's conservative majority upheld the view that material support included "training" and "expert advice and assistance:" and despite claims by two US citizens and six domestic organizations to support the PKK and LTTE with "training" and "expert advice or assistance," or "lawful, nonviolent activities," and "political advocacy," the

57. ACLU (2009) Reclaiming Patriotism: A Call to Reconsider the Patriot Act. American Civil Liberties Union, New York, New York, URL available at http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/safefree/patriot_report_20090310.pdf

58. Roberts, John (2010) Opinion of the Court, Supreme Court of the United States, Eric Holder Jr. Attorney General, AT. Al., Petitioners v. Humanitarian Law Project et al., June 21: 1.

59. Supreme Court of the United States (2010). Holder, Attorney General, ET. AL. v. Humanitarian Law Project et al., Certiorari to the United States Court of appeals for the Ninth Circuit, No. 08-1498. June 21: 1 (emphasis added).

support could not be allowed.[60] Rejection by the court of humanitarian relief such as advice on how to work with the United Nations was included in the ban because support was still being given to groups classified as "terrorist."[61]

As noted above, "communications equipment, facilities" appeared in the original act and even as arguments about the PKK and LTTE were made, discussion about the materiel of the Internet that makes it possible to speak, to organize, to make war, was not mentioned in this Supreme Court case. The Internet was the absent entity. The irony was that while the Supreme Court refused to allow conversation between terrorists and American citizens, the unregulated communications system of the Internet continued to offer the opportunity for speech to the PKK and the LTTE, jihadists and others – in fact anybody. Proletarianization was mobilized, despite detailed legal arguments and efforts to apply definitions of "terror" to people seeking a homeland. Making speech illegal with the PKK and LTTE would force them into illegal speech on a network where it was indeed permissible for them to speak, despite the surveillance.

While the US Supreme Court argued about definitions of terrorism and "expert advice or assistance" between US citizens and supporters of PKK and LTTE, the Internet continued. Even as policy discussions about information warfare escalated, debates about free speech in the Internet era had a quaintness that did not match the world that the Internet had made. What was less quaint of course was that "communications equipment and facilities" that were banned from being given to terrorists were being used to generate terror anyway. In fact, the Internet made it possible for the US to send unmanned aircraft loaded with high explosives, or Predator drones into areas of the world where opponents of the west were living and hiding. With almost tedious regularity, jihadists announced another action against the infidels on websites and in emails and video reports. As they spoke the drones continued seeking targets. No matter that Stephen Breyer and the dissenters from the Supreme Court's majority ruling argued that "All the activities (of the PKK and the LTTE) involve the communication and advocacy of political ideas and lawful means of achieving material ends."[62] Politics as it had been known was over. Drones became the end point of an attempt to silence those who already felt oppressed and who sought emancipation. Attempts at silencing terror cultivated the ideology of hatred, burnishing the anger by refusing to communicate, reinforcing the utility of the

60. Roberts, John (2010) Opinion of the Court, Supreme Court of the United States, Eric Holder Jr. Attorney General, AT. Al., Petitioners v. Humanitarian Law Project et al., June 21: 16-17.

61. Roberts, John (2010) Opinion of the Court, Supreme Court of the United States, Eric Holder Jr. Attorney General, AT. Al., Petitioners v. Humanitarian Law Project et al., June 21: 17

62. Breyer, J., (2010) Dissenting, with Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor join, Supreme Court of the United States, Eric Holder Jr. Attorney General, AT. Al., Petitioners v. Humanitarian Law Project et al., June 21: 2.

Internet where the excesses of communication embodied proletarianization. The drones and the cameras that streamed images of senseless annihilations were part of the expanding picture into which everyone was and is incorporated. "This robot slaughter drags us into a terrible feedback loop, where the US launches more drone attacks to deal with jihadism, which makes jihadism worse, which prompts more drone attacks, which makes jihadism worse -- and on and on."[63]

Given this perspective the Internet can be viewed as a tool for the ideological grooming of hatred or a tool for the ideological grooming of everyone within increasingly narrow definitions: the definitions of fundamentalism. Efforts to change the orientation of the Internet away from proletarianization may never arrive. This is the apocalyptical side of proletarianization that seems only to intensify. For example, *The Washington Times* report "Top Secret America: A hidden world, growing beyond control" published on July 19, 2010 claimed that the $75 billion US intelligence budget funded 1,271 government organizations in 10,000 locations to work on top-secret programs. The report also found that 50,000 intelligence reports are produced each year, while nearly 2 billion communications are intercepted and stored every day.[64] All this information is constructed within a war-based security apparatus in which the Internet has become a networked observation system. Almost every action of every human being on the planet can be observed through accessing telephony of every kind, email, satellites and monitoring Global Positioning Systems and tracking devices, all of which are reduced to devices collecting data. Surely this too is ideological grooming? It is premised on the idea that the enemy is "a dangerous other," set against the US and the west which are conceived as the national "collective self."[65] Constructing this hardening dualism within a culture of securitization - "special rights" creating exceptional measures because of war - involves the logic of action to counter threats to the collective.[66] As all of life is open to scrutiny it is reduced to its status as data, locked in to a war culture. This aspect of ideological grooming concentrates and focuses on identifying proletarianization – non-Enlightenment, immature acts of terror by the other, who recognize their position as the abject and dedicate themselves to the performance of their negative identity.

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63. Hari, John (2010) "Obama's Escalating Robot War in Pakistan is Making a Terror Attack More Likely, The Huffington Post. Accessed 14 October, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johann-hari/obamas-escalating-robot-w_b_763578.html?utm_source=DailyBrief&utm_campaign=101510&utm_medium=email&utm_content=BlogEntry&utm_term=Daily+Brief

64. Priest, Dana and Arkin, William (2010) "Top Secret America." The Washington Post, 19 July, URL available at http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/articles/

65. Cavelty, Myriam Dunn (2007) "Cyber-Terror – Looming Threat or Phamtom Menace." Journal of Information Technology and Politics, Vol. 4 (1): 20 – 38, (29).

66. Cavelty, Myriam Dunn (2007) "Cyber-Terror – Looming Threat or Phamtom Menace." Journal of Information Technology and Politics, Vol. 4 (1): 20 – 38, (22).

This analysis and its implications is becoming more urgent as time progresses. After a US Deputy Secretary for Defense wrote that "As a doctrinal matter, the Pentagon has formally recognized cyberspace as a new domain of warfare," Seymour Hersh asked in November 2010, "This definition raises questions about where the battlefield begins and where it ends. If the military is operating in "cyberspace," does that include civilian computers in American homes?"[67] The answer is that the jihad is everywhere, it has become the swarm, it is the proletarianization that is inescapable.

It is important to remember that proletarianization is not something that happens to westerners. Many more thousands of Muslims who have been deemed too secular, wrongly western and not faithful enough for jihadists have been killed by fundamentalists in the east. They too are part of the story and should not be forgotten within the apocalypse of the Internet with its focus on western interests.

At every turn, jihadists have been able to utilize the Internet to coordinate a plan for independence from the west and from infidels. Just as the network extends everywhere so too does jihad. The interests peddling hope to the hopeless, while offering truth about the state of things, are unlikely to recede, not as long as the Internet exists. Inevitably, jihadists will continue to perform their faith, their anger, their hatred and their love of Mohammad, just as they have for millennia. The Internet embodies this performance, it also cultivates it. It is the window through which proletarianization materializes.

67. Hersh, Seymour (2010) "The Online Threat." The New Yorker, November 1: 44 - 55, (49).

Chapter 10
Conclusion

It is a long journey from Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" to the Internet. What I have explored here is the irritation Benjamin expressed at the close of that essay about the relationship between the rise of new technology and proletarianization. The question is, are we approaching that moment again? My definition of proletariainzation is not a reworking of vulgar Marxist economistic theory - how we become wage slaves and lose our autonomy within an intensified capitalism. Rather, proletarianization as I have used it offers a political economy that draws social and cultural theory together around a transdisciplinary approach. The transgressive knowledge that the Internet has unleashed produces a proletariainzation that incorporates and facilitates a reconstruction of complex social relations on a global scale. The sensations the Internet delivers to and through our monitors are intense, and as I suggest in the chapters on pornography and jihad, the sensations are embodied in acts of emancipation – sexual and bodily realization, religious and national identity, all the while in a newfound relationship with the abject. These changes happen locally, individually, nationally, regionally, globally and collectively: no one said it would be easy.

None of these issues are closed. They are always open, always contingent on changing circumstances and new contexts. Indeed, even as individual Internet users / producers become attached to private devices, new concepts about the collective appear as well. The questions that emerge around

individual versus collective ideology as offered by institutional economics should provoke a lot more research, especially as it becomes clear that the Internet may ultimately make possible the dominance of values that are a long way removed from the taken-for-granted values of the Enlightenment. Public policy will also have to respond to these challenges.

As to recommendations, I considered ending this book with a single sentence that read: "This will end badly," and leave it at that. In contrast to the apocalyptic tone of that approach that is most apparent in the final chapter, I hope that the spirit of openness that defined the originators of the Internet will emerge. After all, one lives in hope.

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The Internet has transformed the social relations that were once managed by the powers that be. As a rapidly maturing communications technology, the Internet has brought people together even while it has reinforced privatism. The desktop computer, the laptop, the cellular and mobile phone, the Global Positoning System, the pilotless drone aircraft, video games and Government documents courtesy of Wikileaks, all are connected on the network of networks. Together these converged elements of a global socio-technical system offer wonderful possibilities for human emancipation, even while those ideas collide with established ideas of civility and decency.

Utilizing a transdisciplinary approach, Uprising examines the way transgressive knowledge circulates in places and spaces where communication regulation has been removed. In doing so, the book offers a new approach to proletarianization. It is based on the theory that the deregulation of the digital infrastructure allows transgressive knowledge to be mobilized in ways that remake political economy. The current moment sees the Internet opening up questions about social organization, power and democracy. The unintended consequences that are attached to this analysis of the Internet are discussed in research about pornography and jihad. These case studies show how proletarianization can be used to understand the Internet, culture and society.

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